

## THE INDEPENDENT

## Britain is the drug capital of **Europe**

The British have developed a predilection for illegal drugs which is unrivalled throughout Europe. Ion Burrell finds that an EU report out tomorrow will put pressure on Britain's policymakers to re-think their whole approach to drug education.

The British tourist authorities will happily concede that this country introduced the world to the delights of whisky and gin: they may not be quite so ready to promote the fact that we also lead the way in our appreciation of other more cent have experimented. illicit substances such as cannabis, amphetamines, LSD and ecstasy.

Tomorrow the European Union will publish a report which will show just how deeply ingrained drug culture has become in British society. It shows that we use considerably more illegal drugs than any other member state.

Cannabis, in particular, impacts more on the national mood than the Government may hitherto have realised. One in eight Britons aged under 40 admitted to having used the drug in the last year.

more than any other country. Young British adults also use more cent of the EU's heroin haul. amphetamines, ecstasy and LSD than citizens of the other EU countries.

More than half of the EU seizures of these so-called "dance drugs" were made in Britain, according to the survey carried out for the EU by the Lisbonbased European Monitoring Centre for across the EU, says the report. Drugs and Drug Addiction.

Alcohol and Health Research Group in Edinburgh, admitted last night: "The UK is the drugs capital of Europe."

The rave culture, which originated in Britain a decade ago, has been exported to all corners of the EU, helping to make drug-taking acceptable among a wide cross-section of young people.

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Georges Estievenart, who led the EU research team, said that dance drugs are the time had come for a thorough re-exon the increase across Europe and the

stereotypical image of drug users as dropouts on the margins of society was no longer relevant. "These drugs are used more and more by young fairly well-todo people. They're often students or they have jobs, but at the weekends they like to take part in rave parties and techno concerts which involve the use of these synthetic drugs,"

The EU report found that 13 per cent of Britons admitted using cannabis in the last year, putting it ahead of Spain (11.6 per cent), France (8.9 per cent), Germany (8.8per cent), and Denmark (7 per cent). Some 29 per cent of Britons under 40 had tried cannabis, a proportion only exceeded in Denmark, where 43 per

The use of "dance drugs" in Britain was unparalleled. Some 11 per cent of under-40s have used amphetamines, 4 per cent in the last year, and 4 per cent have tried ecstasy, half of them in the last 12 months. Only Spain comes close: 3.8 per cent have tried amphetamines, while 3.1 per cent have used ecstasy.

Scizure figures underline the widespread availability of dance drugs. In 1995 Britain accounted for 69 per cent of all seizures of ecstasy across the EU, 59 per cent of amphetamine seizures and 48 per cent of LSD. Britain also seized 27 per

Only in use of the so-called "champagne drug" cocaine does Britain lag behind some of its European neighbours, with 3% admitting that they had tried it, compared with 5.7% of Spaniards and 3.7% of Germans. Heroin use is low

The drug-using habits of British Professor Martin Plant, head of the schoolchildren give even more cause for concern. The EU found that 12% of British 15 and 16-year olds had tried LSD, compared with 4.5% in Spain, the next closest; 37 per cent of British teenagers have tried cannabis.

These findings will be compounded by a survey of teenage drug abuse in 26 countries to be issued by Professor Plant's department on Thursday. He said amination of Britain's drugs policy.



## Pink memorial for gays who died in battle

uals who died in armed service. The hour-long event, a week ahead of former soldiers". the official Remembrance Sunday com-

memoration, was immediately condemned as "distasteful" by the Royal British Legion. After pink carnations were laid at the

More than 200 people attended a wreath the gay rights group Outrage, said: "The laying ceremony at the Cenotaph in White- British Legion should be joining our cer- of people who fought in the Great-Wars I hall yesterday to commemorate homosex- emony not criticising it." But the Legion said the service was "bound to offend many

Servicemen who happened to chance upon the ceremony said they were not offended. Albert Judge, an 85-year-old Chelsea pensioner, saluted the assembled memorial, Peter Tatchell, spokesman for gays and lesbians as he walked down have a problem with gays."

have got nothing against it," said Mr Judge, who served five years in the Royal

Navy and 31 years with the Royal Signals. George Savage, 70, of Covent Garden, who was selling poppies, said: "If they fought and they served I am not against it. but I am against all this political stuff. I don't

### INSIDE **TODAY**



Velvet, the smooth operator



Lee Hurst: Not so hard after all

### TODAY'S NEWS

### Woodward dilemma

Louise Woodward - the British au pair found guilty of murdering a child in her care - may face the agonising choice of either admitting a manslaughter charge in order to reduce her sentence, or continuing to maintain her complete innocence and serving 15 to 20 years in jail. Page 3

## Computer thieves home in

Burglars have worked out a novel way of finding out whether you've got a computer they want to steal, and when you won't be at home to guard it: they just ring you up and ask you. Page 7

## **Rationing BMWs for Brits**

BMW has decided that its cars are becoming too popular in Britain; the German makers think too many people are buying them, so they are going to restrict the number they supply here. Page 7

## French truck dispute

This year's French trucker dispute looks like being even worse than the last. British drivers have been struggling to get back before their Gallic counterparts man the barricades. Page 9

## SEEN & HEARD

It has always been a dog eat dog world but now, it seems, birds are getting in on the act. The great skuas of the Shetland Islands, known as borodes, used to dine mainly off fish. But British Birds magazine reports that, rather than stealing fish from other birds, they are attacking and eating the birds instead. So voracious are the skuas, the magazine fears they could be causing a decline in kittiwake numbers.



WEATHER The Eye, page 10 TELEVISION The Eye, page 12 CROSSWORDS Page 20 and the Eye, page 9

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## **Divided Tories lurch** towards open civil war

Further resignations from William Hague's frontbench team were threatened yesterday, if the party decides to vote against the Amsterdam Treaty next week. Our Political Editor reports on the Tories' running civil

Michael Heseltine, the former deputy prime minister, said vesterday that nothing would persuade him to leave the Conservative Party. He and his colleagues would now make a stand and fight every inch of ground against the Euro-sceptic "rump" that had survived the election landslide.

"You're always going to lose if you let the Euro-sceptics baconslice you," he told BBC Breakfast with Frost, in a reference to what had happened under the last Conservative Government, "That process is now at an end."

Drawing a parallel with Labour's civil war over unilateral nuclear disarmament, Europe, and public ownership in the early 1980s, party conference. Mr Heseltine said: "Nothing would persuade me to leave the Conservative Party."

Some Labour moderates, such sley, had stood and fought the hard Owen, had left Labour to form the Social Democratic Party.

as Denis Healey and Roy Hatter- scribe to it because I don't." Left, while others, such as Shirley easier for me to get out and state Williams, Roy Jenkins and David my principles, then everybody

In the end, Mr Heseltine said, signed from the front bench last

Labour had been won back "to the week, warned the shadow cabinet

voice of reason of the centre-left", that if it stepped up its Euro-

and he added: "It's very possible that David Owen would have led the Labour Party if he'd stayed and

With some right-wingers calling for Tory dissidents to be "dumped" for backing a European single currency, the battle shows every sign of deepening bitterness.

David Curry, the agriculture spokesman who resigned from the shadow cabinet on Saturday, told BBC Radio 5 Live he could not have won the fight against the "hard line" taken against the single currency in the shadow cabinet. "I think that was a declaration of war," he said, "It was bound to be divisive."

Mr Curry indicated he would have been happier with the line tak-

### **ANTHONY BEVINS**

en in the Tories' recent party political broadcast and the "for the foreseesble future" line taken at

But he complained: "They had to drive towards some biblical statement on this which was bound to be divisive and I cannot say I sub-

Mr Curry added: "It is much knows where they are." But Ian Taylor, who also re-

further resignations. Mr Taylor told BBC radio's World this Weekend. I hope we do not take a builheaded view of the Amsterdam Treaty. These are the sort of issues that could trigger further problems within the Conservative Party."

sceptic line, others could follow.

The second reading of the Billi to enact the treaty is scheduled for next week, but the shadow cabinet has to decide on Wednesday whether to demand that all its MPs vote against it, as signalled by Michael Howard, the shadow Foreign Secretary, last week. Peter Lilley, the shadow Chan-

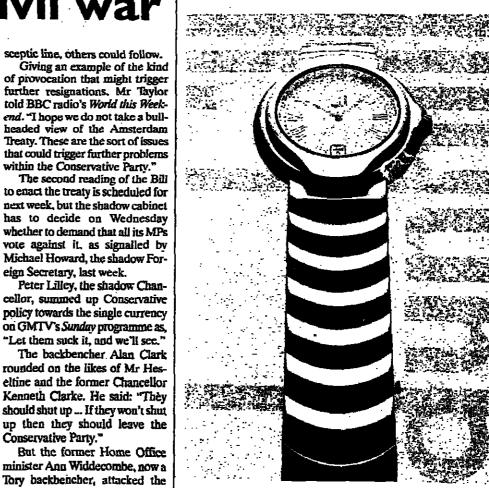
cellor, summed up Conservative policy towards the single currency on GMTV's Sunday programme as, "Let them suck it, and we'll see." The backbencher Alan Clark

rounded on the likes of Mr Heseltine and the former Chancellor Kenneth Clarke. He said: "They should shut up ... If they won't shut up then they should leave the Conservative Party."

But the former Home Office minister Ann Widdecombe, now a Tory backbencher, attacked the leadership, saying it had been provocative to depart from the previous policy which held the party together - ruling out participation "for the foreseeable future".

As ominous for the Tory leadership, Edward Macmillan-Scott, leader of the Conservative Members of the European Parliament. told BBC television's On the Record that he and his colleagues were not bound by Mr Hague's policy. The European parliamentary elections take place in 1999.

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## **COLUMN ONE**

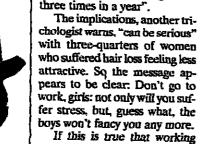
## Going bald, girls? Don't worry, it's distinguished

Look carefully next time you venture into the City. According to a Sunday newspaper yesterday you will see "thousands of young women" ali apparently going baid. The reason? Their high-flying careers.

A study carried out by Dr Hugh Rushton, consultant trichologist from the School of Pharmacy at the University of Portsmouth interviewed 800 women, of whom about 30 per cent said they were suffering hair loss. The reason for this was said to be women adopting more aggressive and competitive working styles which medical "experts" say results in an increased sensitivity to testosterone, the male hormone which is already present, albeit in much lower levels in women.

High levels of testosterone have been linked in the past to hair loss. The number of women in professional jobs has risen by 20 per cent over the past 15 years. QED.

Look at 28-year-old Tracey Webb. She puts down her hair loss (she used to have long blonde hair, within two years she had to wear a wig) to "the stress of a demanding job in publishing and moving house



women are going to be suffering more hair loss because of aggressive, traditionally male, working practices, then let's hope we can at least benefit from a few other

masculine traits. Let's have more cosy female-only clubs so that we can drink after hours and network. In fact, let's go out and get drunk with people we work with and not worry about the way we'll be perceived in the office afterwards. And be able to tell our partners: "Was verr 'portant had to sheav out ... Wash good for busness. Would've bin awfoo if 'adn't bin air." Then fall over, burp, and fall asleep on the couch. Girls, let's wear the same disgusting suits to work every day; and let's learn to lean over someone else's computer terminal and say: "Well it's obvious, isn't it? Press that button there and it'll work." And then, when it doesn't, let's be able to say: "Well I don't know what on earth you can have been doing to it. You've com-

Expect three Michelin stars if you manage to open a tin of baked beans for the family tea. (Usually ignore the fact that for the past 10 years your loving partner has rustled up a three-course meal out of a bit of salad, some sticky backed plastic and a squeegee bottle). In fact, sisters, let's run out of the house as soon as we hear a baby crying, turn green at the thought of giving birth, and look rather hopeless and confused if asked to distinguish between beige and taupe.

pletely messed up the system."

It can only be for the best. Because if we are going to watch our hair recede we can finally use the argument they've been using for decades - "it's not unattractive, it's distinguished". Let's all learn to pursue young whippersnappers half our age and have no shame. Let's spend all our time on golf courses instead of the office. Midlife crisis? I can hardly wait! - Glenda Cooper, Social Affairs Correspondent

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## PEOPLE



### Pavarotti hits top C for a 10-year-old boy

Lucíano Pavarotti has given a personal singing lesson to a 10-year-old boy with cerebral palsy whose health was dramatically improved after he started watching videos of the tenor in order to learn his breathing technique.

Allan Morton (above, with Pavarotti) from Kincardine-on-Forth, Fife, was born with cerebral palsy and hydrocephalus, and as a baby was slow to react to his surroundings. But when he was two he suddenly became "animated" when he saw Pavarotti on the television, and by the age of six had worn out countless videos of the singer. When doctors suggested that Allan take singing lessons to improve his breathing, he focussed on Pavarotti's work and can now sing arias in both Italian and English.

For his 10th birthday, Pavarotti invited Allan to one of his concerts in Manchester as a special treat and asked him backstage afterwards. Allan sang in Italian for the tenor, who then showed him how to hit a difficult top C. "I will show you how to sing that note. Before you go for it, pause, take a breath and then hit it," Pavarotti told him."

The maestro then applauded, gave Allan a hug and presented him with a signed autobiography before saying: "You sing like an angel."

Allan said afterwards that it was a dream come true to be able to sing in front of Pavarotti, "To sing for the maestro is the most wonderful moment of my life," he said. "Ever since I can remember his voice has inspired me. I can sing all his arias in both English and Italian, but there cannot be many people who get a singing lesson from the great man.

Geoff O'Connell, marketing director of the housebuilding company Beliway, which sponsored the concert, said: "As soon as Pavarotti heard about this most moving story he insisted on meeting Allan - and that he sang for him."

Last May, Pavarotti sang at the Royal Opera House before it closed for redevelopment. It was his only solo performance in London of the season and his first recital at the Royal Opera House in eight years. Pavarotti arrived in London with his girlfriend 27- year-old Nicoletta Mantovani. She was the singer's secretary, but moved into his Italian home two years ago when Pavarotti left his wife of 36 years.

She immediately put him on a strict diet to reduce his legendary bulk by several stones, and has been credited with huge influence over him, despite being younger than his three daughters.

### Hillary's optimistic words for peace in Ulster



Hillary Clinton, the American Richard Branson, and the record-First Lady, spoke of her hopes for breaking Thrust SST team leadthe Northern Ireland peace process yesterday in a speech at the US Embassy in London

Mrs Clinton, who has spent part of the weekend with Tony and Cherie Blair, said she had noticed a sense of hopefulness during ber trip to Dublin and Belfast.

"Although the euphoria of the President's [Clinton] trip nearly two years ago is not present, there certainly is a hopefulness and perhaps a more pragmatic sense of what it will take to try to bring the parties together." she told around 100 guests, including Virgin chief to his trip.

er Richard Noble and his wife, at the embassy. It was extraordinary that both

parties were sitting down and speaking to one another, she added. "I congratulate the Prime all that they have done to further this event. As I have said in Dublin and Belfast, the President will stand with those who take risks for peace."

She said a date, soon to be released, had been set for Mr Blair to visit America and added she was very much looking forward

#### Ban cruelty, says O'Sullevan

Sir Peter O'Sullevan, the racing commentator, will lead a protest against live animal exports today when he delivers a petition calling for a ban on live exports to Elliot Morley, the animal welfare minister. About 800,000 signatures have been collected by Compassion in World Farming, the animal rights campaigners.

7.30 FOR 8

Sir Peter, 79, said: "This inhumane trade in living creatures should be banned forthwith."

To coincide with the petition. the group is releasing video footage of animals being handled roughly in foreign abattoirs, and evidence that EU rules on resting and watering animals in transit are being flouted.

## UPDATE

#### **POLICE**

### A force for independent discipline

Many police officers would be happy to have complaints against them investigated by an independent body, according to a new survey, which found that exactly one-third of officers actually want an independent organisation to replace the current system.

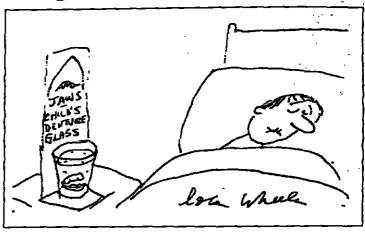
At the moment, a network of Police Complaints Authorities investigates complaints by members of the public against officers.

A further 20 per cent of officers would not mind whether a new independent body was set up to replace the PCAs or whether the police themselves continued to investigate complaints. However, nearly 45 per cent, the largest single group of officers, would prefer such disciplinary procedures to be kept in-house. Nevertheless, the findings of the survey carried out for the Police Federation, which represents rank and file officers, are likely to strengthen the staff association's call for complaints against its members to be dealt with by an independent body.

The poll, based on the opinions of 9,000 serving officers, also found that nearly 85 per cent thought the public would have greater confidence in an independent complaints body, compared with just 7 per cent for the PCAs.

#### HEALTH

#### Young teeth suffer lack of fluoride



Children in parts of the UK where fluoride is not added to water supplies have up to seven times more tooth decay than those living elsewhere, a

Particular black spots were identified in the north-west, north, Scotland, Northern Ireland, Wales and inner London. Five-year-olds with the worst teeth were most likely to live in the poorest regions of areas which did not receive fluoridated water, it was claimed. One in three of these children had undergone tooth extraction under general anaesthetic by the age of five. The figures were published by the National Alliance Against Dental Health Inequalities, representing 31 medical, dental and voluntary organisations. Fluoridated parts of the West Midlands, including some with high levels of social deprivation, had the best tooth decay record for

#### **BUSINESS**

#### London voted EU's capital city

European Union company executives have voted London Europe's best city for business for the eighth year running, it was revealed today.

The European Cities Monitor 1997 survey, published by Healey & Baker, international property consultants, showed that the UK capital won the accolade by a considerable margin in the eighth annual survey of senior executives from more than 500 leading European companies. Paris was in overall second place and Frankfurt was third. London's premier... position as Europe's business capital is stronger than ever and it came top in six key criteria for determining where companies locate: easy access to markets; external transport links; quality of telecommunications; languages spoken; office space availability; and best internal transport.

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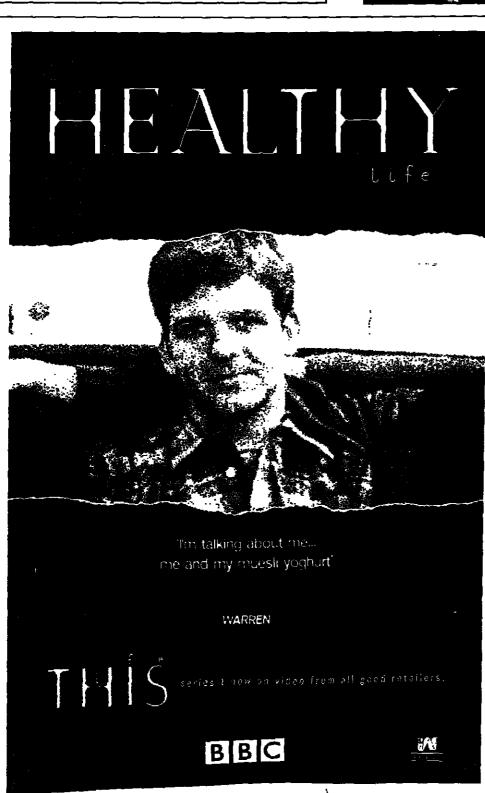
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Ireland (punts)	1.07	USA (\$)	1.62		
Hong Kong (\$)	12.47	Turkey (lira)	292,850		
Greece (drachmei)	443.52	Switzerland (francs)	2.28		
Germany (marks)	2.80	Sweden (kroner)	12.19		
France (francs)	9.37	Spain (pesetas)	235.35		
Denmark (kroner)	10.68	Portugal (escudos)	283.75		
Cyprus (pounds)	0.82	Norway (kroner)	11.41		
Canada (\$)	2.28	Netherlands (guilders)	3.14		
Belgium (francs)	57.65	Malta (lira)	0.62		
Austria (schillings)	19.62	Japan (yen)	197.87		
Australia (dollars)	2.29	Italy (lira)	2,751		
TOURIST RATES		•			

by Chris Priestley







## Woodward faces the hardest choice of all

The eyes of Britain and America are on Judge Hiller Zobel who tomorrow will be asked by Louise Woodward's defence team to mitigate the murder verdict given by the jury in her trial last week. He faces a complicated choice but, as Dovid Usbome explains, it is Louise herself who may have the hardest decision.

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Louise Woodward says she is innocent. If that is so, then she may shortly face a dilemma unfathomable in its wretchedness. Should the judge in her murder trial. Hiller Zobel, decide after hearings tomorrow to lessen the verdict given by the jury last week from Murder Two to manslaughter, she will need to profess her guilt to the court.

Meanwhile, as Ms Woodward waited in her cell at the Framingham maximum securi- in the first- or second-degrees. ty prison outside Boston yesterday, another critical element was uncovered by The Independent: under seal of the court. sources, a videotape showing Deborah Eappen, the mother of the victim, Matthew, coating his elder brother Brendan - vainly - to say that Ms Woodward committed the murder.

fence team goes before the judge tomorrow it will exercise its right to implore the judge to consider three options, aside from upholding the verdict: to throw out the verdict and declare an acquittal; to order a retrial from scratch; or, indeed, to reduce the charge to manslaughter. Written motions will be submitted by the defence to the court this afternoon.

Many experts believe that if

nocent, will be this; does she agree to plead guilty to manslaughter of a small child and ensure that she is home soon, probably before the millennium? Or does she maintain the purity of her innocence and consign herself to perhaps 15 or 20 years of incurceration?

All that we know of Ms Woodward so far suggests that she may resist the manslaughter compromise, even though it would leave Judge Zobel to decide on a sentence that could end being three to five years imsome higher faith in the powers of justice. Ms Woodward has shown no willingness to compromise the purity of her declared innocunce.

Indeed almost the last words we heard from her were at the moment of sentencing last Fri-"I would like to maintain my innocence". And when it was asked what charges it would like the jury to consider before deliberations began last Tuesday, the defence opted for murder or nothing at all, that is acquittal. That gamble, of course,

One juror was quoted in one there exists, according to police British newspaper yesterday saying that the jury regretted not having manslaughter as an option it could consider. She said later, however, that she had been misquoted. While the chances of the

It is certain that when the de- judge simply declaring an acquittal are considered infinitessimal, it is not beyond imagination that he could take the middle option; calling a retrial. In that circumstance, the first step one would expect would be a plea bargain negotiation between the two sides which would involve asking Ms Woodward to take exactly the same decision: agreeing to plead guilty to manslaugther.

Questions then arise about Judge Zobel chooses any of what tactics the defence would these three, it will be the last. adopt if such negotiations failed But there is no certainty that Ms—and a new trial did become nec-Woodward would co-operate. essary. Would it open those cause the killing was intention- Davey read out letters of sup-

controversially, left closed in the first trial? Would it offer an explanation, an alternative seenario - of how Matthew may have died if Ms Woodward did not do it. Many observers feel it was an error not to have done this in the first trial. And would the defence directly challenge the credibility of the parents who say they had nothing to do with Matthew's death nor knew of any other possible explanation for it?

In that scenario, the video-

tape, about which the jury was prisonment or less. Whether told nothing, could become through pride, stubbornness or eritical. While The Independent has not seen it, the police sources say that it lasts 30 minutes and was filmed by Deborah Euppen. It allegedly shows Brendan, the elder brother, on the floor of the home painting while his mother repeatedly asks him to say that Ms Woodday when she briefly rose to say: ward harmed Matthew. He replies in the opposite sense, with one-sentence remarks along the lines that he loved Louise, Matthew loved Louise, and Louise loved them.

> It is also possible that the defence could examine the behaviour of Brendan himself. Aged two years and eight months when Matthew died. Brendan was a boisterous boy who, according to the testimony of Ms Woodward on the stand would occasionally leap on his brother from his full height. Also under examination now

is the role of EF Au Pair, the agency that placed Ms Woodward with the Eappens in November last year. It is widely assumed that the Eappens will shortly file a civil suit against the agency and that the couple may be hoping to get as much as \$20m in a liability settlement.

Theoretically, a manslaughter outcome could harm EF Au Pair's interests because it implies recklessness on the part of their client, Ms Woodward. Sources say, however, that they would be insured in that instance. If Murder Two is maintained, the insurance would not apply but EF Au Pair could claim that be-Her agony, if indeed she is in- doors it so conspicuously, and al it has no liability.



Symbolic gesture: Jacqui Pilling, 22, one of Louise's former schoolfriends, tying a yellow ribbon to the Elton village signpost after yesterday's service at the parish church

## Prayers as campaign gains momentum

neighbours in her home of Elton prayed yesterday for all "whose vision of the world is

seen through prison bars". Parishioners at the churches of St James's and St Mary's in the neighbouring villages of Ince and Thornton-Le-Moors were asked to offer up their prayers for 19-year-old Louise and her family.

port from the Bishop of Birken-

Louise Woodward's friends and head, the Rt Rev Michael Langrish, and former vicars of the

> "I have been overwhelmed by the telephone calls and mail coming in from all around the world," he added.

"Over £6,000 in contributions and donations came into The Rigger pub yesterday morning. You are not alone. There are an awful lot of peocout there think

Before the sermon Mr Dav-

ey added: "I am not preaching all over the world who are about Louise. I am too emopouring out their emotions as tional to actually do it. Secondly, a result of Louise's conviction. I haven't had enough time to sit "We are getting phone calls down and reflect on the situafrom people who are grieving," she said.

Many parishioners filing out "We need counsellors desof the small chapel wore the yelperately. People are crying their low ribbons which have come to eves out at what has happened." signify the struggle to bring Ms

Woodward back home. Hazel Mayamba-Kasongo, a over the world and that the cammunity was considering setting

up counselling lines for people

Ms Mayamba-Kasongo said money was pouring in from all

gathering momentum.

INTHE INDEPENDENT **TOMORROW** 



Not so bad after all: Tom Lubbock on the Turner Prize

THE EYE



Cat in the Hat - Dr Seuss' cash in hand

Cello, piano and ... Barry Humphries

## Local party faces Hague's wrath over expulsion of women candidates

A north London Conservative association is being investigated after the shock expulsion of two of the party's women parliamentary candidates. Anthony Bevins, Political Editor, reports on a case that will give William Hague the chance to flex his muscles.

Senior Tory sources expect tough retaliatory action to be taken against Hendon Conservative Association this week, following the recent expulsion of Jane Ellison and Sheila Scott, two of the rare breed of women who fought as Conservative candidates in the last election.

The women have been told they were expelled under rule 17(i), which gives the local party's executive council power to "strike off the membership

clared opinions or conduct shall in its judgment be inconsistent with the objectives of the association.

The Hendon and Finchlev Times newspaper has already reported a highly contentious and defamatory - allegation made during the executive council proceedings.

But the Conservative leadership is expected to view that as part of a running battle within the local party - which has already resulted in the departure of the agent, the association secretary, and the Young Conservative chairman.

Mrs Scott, who contested Stoke on Trent South at the last election, told The Independent: "I refute absolutely the allegations made against me." A former chairman of the Hendon Association, she is chief executive of the National Care Homes Association and a local

Ms Ellison, customer com-

Tory candidate in last year's Barnsley East by-election, and fought Barnsley East and

Mexborough in the last election. A Conservative Party spokesman said: "Members locally have raised complaints about the conduct and running of the association."

The investigation is being carried out by the Conservative National Union, which represents the party's voluntary wing Hague wants to bring under more central control so that he can exert tougher, Blair-style discipline in cases where the party risks being brought into disrepute.

If tough action is taken against Hendon, however, the national party could have a fight on its hands.

George Ward, the association chairman and managing director of Bonusprint, the high street photographic developers,

roll any member whose de- munications manager with the was the owner of Grunwick Pro-John Lewis Partnership, was the cessing Laboratories, the north London photographic processing firm that became the focal point of protest over trade union rights in 1976.

Striking members of the Association of Professional, Executive, Clerical and Computer Staff were sacked by Grunwick and the subsequent dispute made strong headlines because of angry picket lines joined by other trades unions and Labour MPs - including - one of the elements Mr such moderate figures as Shirley

> Mr Ward won his case in the courts, with a House of Lords judgment in his favour, and it is believed that the Grunwick dispute was one of the factors that influenced the Conservative anti-union legislation of the 1980s under Margaret Thatcher, herself a north London MP.

Mr Ward was out of the country and unavailable for comment when The Independent eans that no standard transaction charges will be made. Although no security set-up fees will be charged we do reserve the right to charge fout of pocket' expens such as Company House and Land Registry fees. Midland Bank pk, reserves the right not to open an account. Member HSBC Group

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## Surrogate mother set for legal battle

The biological father of a surrogate mother's newborn baby has begun a legal battle for custody of the child after she refused to give him up. Kate Watson-Smyth reports on the looming custody

Clemens Peeters, the biological father of the baby he has named Julian, has filled application for access at Middlesbrough County Court and plans to file an-

other for custody. Karen Roche, 32, who gave birth to the child she calls Stuan eight days ago, agreed to bear the child for Mr Peeters and his wife, Sonja, for £12,000. But she broke her side of the agreement and even claimed to

the Peeters from having the

In an interview with BBC TV's Panoruma programme, to be shown tonight, Mr Peeters accuses Mrs Roche of using the child as "some kind of merchandise that could be sold to the highest bidder".

He says: "We feel that's our baby, we are the parents that are meant to have the baby. We are the ones that think we can give the proper love and care it

The legal struggle is the culmination of nine months of wrangling over the fate of the

how she "bonded" with the haby while it was still in the

Mrs Roche claims the Dutch

arrangement hadn't gone Mrs Roche has described

In an interview with a national newspaper she said: "I Mrs Roche and the Peeters sion tonight at 10pm.

have had an abortion to prevent wouldn't sell him for a million soon turned sour after she was pounds. The joy he is bringing us is as good as winning the Lottery. There is no deal to sell our gate mother, last January. baby to the Peeters or anyone

> "Even before he was born, over and threatened to have an I had bonded with him. Then, when I saw his beautiful un- also struck with a second couwrinkled face, the bond grew ple, Ed and Jean Hunter.

couple broke their side of the deal by failing to fulfil promises to visit Britain to monitor the She added: "If the surrogacy

wrong, I know I would have been strong enough to hand him over. I wouldn't have allowed myself to bond with him in the like does the nightmare ever way that I have, both before and after the birth."

The relationship between will be shown on BBC 1 televi-

put in touch with them by Kim Cotton, Britain's first surro-Mrs Roche later decided

she would not hand the child abortion. Another deal was

Mr Peeters tells the programme of his "total disbelief" when he and his wife read in the newspapers that Mrs Roche had not terminated his child but was in fact in the process of negotiating to hand over the baby to another couple.

"We thought that the worst thing that could ever happen to us had already happened. It's Panorama: The Surrogate





## 'Blame and shame' tactic puts poorer pupils more at risk of failing

The Government's drive to raise standards in schools could leave disadvantaged children slipping even further behind their classmates, according to research published

The direct challenge to Labour's core education policy comes from London University's Institute of Education, where the government standards adviser, Michael Barber, was professor of new initiatives until they intend to work towards national stantaking up his current post earlier this year. dards goals.

The study, "Can school improvement overcome the effects of disadvantage?", argues that a government strategy of "blame and shame" will merely lead to cynicism among teachers of poorer pupils. Only last month, the schools standards minister, Stephen Byers, insisted poverty would be no excuse for under-performance by schools, which must set targets showing how

The Institute of Education director Professor Peter Mortimore and co-author uniform grants have done too little to com-Geoff Whitty, claim in their report that "blaming schools for the problems of society is unfair and unproductive".

Initiatives by successive governments have failed to break the pattern of persistent underachievement among children from deprived homes, says the study, through a lack of adequate targeting, resources and co-ordination with other services.

by poorer children, who are more likely to work with such children. be physically weaker, have less energy for ' learning and less opportunity for study at lated aspects of disadvantage at their roots home than their better-off peers.

If the gap between rich and poor is not to widen further, according to the study, encing overall patterns of educational there must be a clearer recognition of what schools can and cannot be expected to do,

Initiatives such as free school meak and with more co-ordination with other agenpensate for the disadvantages experienced and greater recognition for teachers who

> "Policies which tackle poverty and reare likely to be more successful than purely educational interventions in influinequality," the report concludes.

The Government justifies its "no ex-

cuses" stance by pointing to differing levels of achievement by schools in similar areas as evidence of the potential for some relatively poor performers to raise standards.

Policies aimed directly at helping poorer pupils include the setting up of education action zones in inner cities and - as revealed last week in The Independent - rural areas in order to target resources and support to those in most need.

- Lucy Word

The Car Test

Cterotet no see



at a steady 20mph, the speed limit for the run Photograph: Paulo Macarico

## Professor blows top over Montserrat shambles

landers left homeless by a volcanic eruption live in shelters with no proper sanitation,

of the chief scientists on the island, follows retary of State for International Development, that Montserratians would be asking for "golden elephants" next.

The civil servants dealing with the crisis indulged in "extravagant and disproportionate" spending on themselves while others had their every request scrutinised. Professor Sparks says in a submission to a Commons inquiry. Delivery of 10 new com- and scientists were not invited. puters and air-conditioned four-wheeldrive vehicles for government staff upset scientists who at one stage had to use spite warnings a year ago that it was toxic clapped-out hire-cars to go into the dan- and could cause silicosis. The report also gerous areas, he says, "No doubt the many says there are 11 volcanic islands in the Montserratians who have been living in Caribbean, all of which will suffer eruptions primitive shelters for nearly two years similar to the one on Montserrat, up to five were even less impressed."

Prof Sparks's report says senior scientists were asked to spend valuable hours jus- seemed happy with their equipment when tifying requests for radios which were vital George Foulkes, a minister in the departto their safety. Lines of communication with ment, visited in September. - Fron Abrams

British officials in Montserrat can buy cost- officials were "frustrating and confusing," ly cars and the latest technology, while is- and the whole system of running the dependent territory was "byzantine."

"The natural catastrophe of an eruptaccording to a report being studied by MPs. ing and dangerous volcano has been exac-The evidence by Stephen Sparks, one erbated by anachronistic administrative systems more suited to our colonial past," anger over a comment by Clare Short, Sec- he writes. Prof Sparks told the Independent the scientists' frustration stemmed not from lack of money but lack of the flexibility enjoyed by Department for International Development (DfID) officials.

In March last year, eight months after the volcano started crupting, a meeting was held on a development plan for the island. The agenda did not mention the volcano,

A report on the health hazards of volcamic ash has only just been com of them in the next century.

A DfID spokesman the scientists had

### Police hunt death-crash driver who fled in police car

A driver jumped a set of red lights and crashed into another car, killing a retired army officer, then fled by stealing the police car in which he was put while the lone officer tried to help the

The accident happened as a police car followed a Ford Fiesta XR2 which was doing more than 70mph in a 30mph area of Barusley, South Yorkshire, early yesterday, police said. As the Fiesta approached the set of red lights the driver accelerated past a queue of stationary traffic and crashed into the side of a Peugeot 406 driven by Peter Walpole, 60, who died shortly afterwards in Barnsley hospital.

The injured driver of the Fiesta was put in the back of the police car while the officer attempted to help Mr Walpole, but he commandeered the vehicle and drove off, hitting the officer as he tried to intervene. Police believe they know the identity of the driver and were last night attempting to trace him. The police car was found abandoned 15 miles from the crash scene.

#### **Woman in parachute terror**

A woman was suspended from power cables for 90 minutes when she drifted off-course during a charity parachute jump at Netheravon, Wiltshire, yesterday.

Sarah Wicks, 24, from Watford, Hertfordshire, was eventually rescued by a farm tractor after the power was turned off and suffered only minor leg burns. She was not affected by the electricity because she was not earthed.

#### Two held in murder hunt

Detectives hunting the killer of a father-of-two in a baseball bat attack have arrested two men. Leigh Shaw, 37, was battered to death outside a social club on the Whitehawk housing estate in Brighton, East Sussex. The two men were being questioned by detectives at John Street police station in Brighton.

#### Rescuers battle to save whale

Coastguards were last night trying to guide a whale back into the North Sea after it became stranded in the Humber estuary.

The 45ft Minke whale was found beached yesterday on mudbanks at South Ferriby, near Hull. The incoming tide floated the whale shortly after 4pm and a small flotilla of boats was attempting to guide it into the main channel and back out to sea.

We are trying to coax it out to sea. It's some 24 to 25 miles inland at the moment and we just hope it can be guided into the deep main channel." said a Coastguard spokesman.

#### Three share lottery jackpot

Three ticketholders collected almost £3m each in last night's National Lottery draw, Camelot said. The winning numbers were 37, 16, 10, 39, 09, and 14, with bonus number 28.

### DAILY POEM

To the Statues in Poets' Corner, Westminster Abbey

by Adriani Mitchell

You stony bunch of pockskinned whiteys, Why kip in here? Who sentenced you? They are buying postcards of you. The girls in safety knickers. Tombfaces, glumbums,

Wine should be jumping out all of your holes, You should have eyes that roll, arms that knock things over, Legs that falter and working cocks. Listen.

On William Blake's birthday we're going to free you, Blast you off your platforms with a blowtorch full of brandy And then we'll all stomp over to the Houses of Parliament And drive them into the Thames with our bananas.

This week's poems celebrate the 65th birthday of Adrian Mitchell, the lyrical, radical conscience of British poetry for 40 years. They come from the new collection Heart on the Left: Poems 1953-1984, published by Bloodaxe Books at £9.95. "Among all the voices of the Court," says Ted Hughes, Adrian Mitchell is "a voice as welcome as Lear's Fool".



Ireland, who said on BBCI's Breakfast with Frost programme yesterday that she had won her battle against the brain tumour she discovered in January. She was 'very well' and 'fully back to health' and confirmed that she had not needed treatment for the past five to six months.

She also revealed she had given up smoking. The kids drove me to it. My husband's children nag constantly,' she said Photograph: Brian Harris

## MI5 denies blunder over Israeli embassy bombing

Allegations by a former MI5 officer that various intelligence suggesting the embassy refuted yesterday by the Home Secretary and the head of the Security Service.

David Shayler, who is under police investigation for breaking the Official Secrets Act, says the Security Service failed to act on a report that the embassy was about to be attacked. A car-bomb injured 13 people and damaged the embassy, in Kensington Palace Gardens, London, in 1994 as part of an attempt to destabilise the Middle East peace process. In a second blast, at a London office-block used by Jewish charities, six people were injured.

to act on information provided by a highexplosion the warning details were discovered in a filing-cabinet, it is claimed.

Jack Straw, Home Secretary, and Stephen Lander, head of MI5, last week agreed to lift an order banning publication of Mr Shayler's allegations in the Mail on Sunday, saying claims about the embassy were false and therefore not damaging to security. It is understood MI5 did receive

warnings were ignored days before an at- was a likely target after a similar attack in tack on the Israeli embassy in London were Argentina a week earlier, but there were no specific details. Government sources denied they had information about the bombing and ignored it. It is understood the Security Service contacted Mossad, the Israeli agency, to assure them it did not blunder over protection of the London embassy. Mr Straw said: "Having discussed with

the Security Service the allegations ... I can say that it is not the case that such information as it possessed would have enabled the service to prevent the Israeli embassy bombing." A government source added: Shayler seems to have obtained a mistaken Mr Shayler says an MI5 officer failed impression. He was not working in the relevant part of the office at the time of the ident. This story must be based on onsnent attack on the embassy. Days after the sip." The source added that while the allegations were potentially damaging for MI5's reputation, this was not a reason to block them. Mr Shayler has already revealed that thousands of outdated files were being kept by the Security Services, including information about Mr Straw and Peter Mandelson, Minister without Portfolio. Mr Shayler is somewhere on the Continent.

Jason Bennetto, Crime Correspondent

#### New hope for appeal in Bentley case

Hopes were growing yesterday that the case have it. Chris." The defence said Bentley of Derek Bentley, hanged for murdering was trying to persuade Craig to give up his a policeman in 1953, will be referred back weapon, while the prosecution alleged it was to the Court of Appeal. The Criminal Cas- an instruction to fire. Craig and Bentley dees Review Commission is said to be close nied the words were said. to announcing its review of the conviction.

should never have been hanged for his part don, in 1952. His accomplice, Christopher Craig, fired the shot that killed Miles while Michael Howard, granted him a posthu-Bentley was being held by another officer. Police said that before the shot was fired Bentley shouted to his accomplice: "Let him been imposed.

Craig, aged 16, was too young to be Campaigners said 19-year-old Bentley hanged and served 10 years, but although the jury recommended mercy, Lord Chief in the murder of Pc Sidney Miles during a Justice Goddard gave the death sentence bungled robbery in Croydon, South Lon- to Bentley, who had a mental age of 11.

In 1993 the then home secretary, mous pardon but limited it to an admission that the death sentence should not have

## **BA** legal threat over low-cost flights

legal action against British Airways over its executives are studying the viability of plans to set up a low-cost offshoot.

Easy Jet began operating its service between Scotland and Luton two years ago, and over that period one in 10 British Air- BA said it would decide whether or not to ways passengers on the routes to Edinburgh go ahead by the end of the year. and Glasgow has switched to the low-cost carrier. Its fares, starting at £29 one-way plus tax, have proved so successful that the with the idea: "BA is a dominant player in original "fleet" of two borrowed Boeing the UK travel industry, and as such it has 737s has been expanded to comprise sev- a special responsibility not to take action en aircraft of its own, with another 12 on order at a cost of £300m.

British Airways is so concerned about

The no-frills airline EasyJet is threatening the amount of customers it has lost that launching a low-cost airline of its own.

At the Association of British Travel Agents convention in Tenerife yesterday,

EasyJet's Tony Anderson said his airline would seek legal redress if BA went ahead that is aimed specifically at forcing low-cost competitors out of the market."

- Simon Calder

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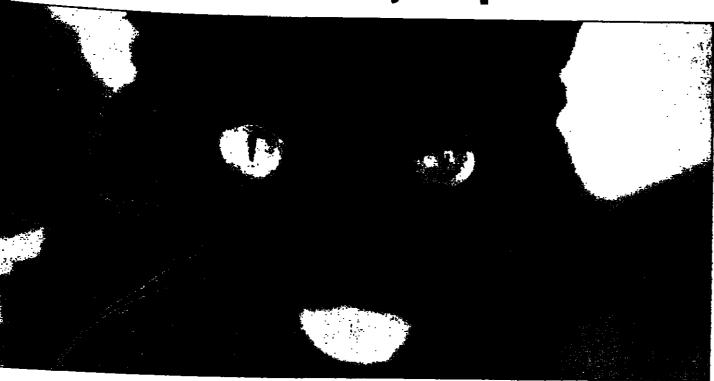
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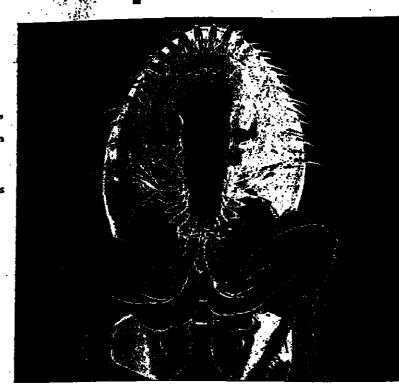


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## Hungry cat fleas jump to it for an autumn epidemic



Pest and host: The cat flea, flourished during the warr autumn on cats such as Bingo, despite the use of Photograph: John Voos



It can jump !!8 times its own height, survives for months without food and breeds at a rate that puts rabbits to shame.

The cat flea,

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atley case

Ctenocephalides felis, is proving harder than ever to eradicate. Kathy Marks finds that an epidemic is driving householders to distraction.

Autumn is the season when pet owners breathe a sigh of relief, confident that the annual explosion of cat fleas is over. This year, though, is proving to be unusual. Instead of dying off, the fleas are hanging around, stubborn, numerous and voraciously hungry.

Vets are reporting long queues in their surgeries of distraught people covered in bites from head to foot. Shops are being emptied of anti-flea treatments and business is thriving for pest control companies.

"People are coming into my surgery absolutely desperate home from holiday with her because their homes are completely infested," said John Bower, a vet in Plymouth. "They say that they don't care what it takes or what it costs, they just want the fleas out."

Paul DeVile, a vet in Eastbourne, East Sussex, said: "Every year seems worse than the last, but this one is particularly bad. I would have expected the fleas to have all died off by now."

A warm October, followed by a sudden transition to wintry conditions, is thought to be come out on top."

partly to blame. Usually there is a flua peak in spring, as the weather warms up, followed

by a final fling in late August. However, widespread central heating means that the microscopic parasites increasingly breed throughout the year.

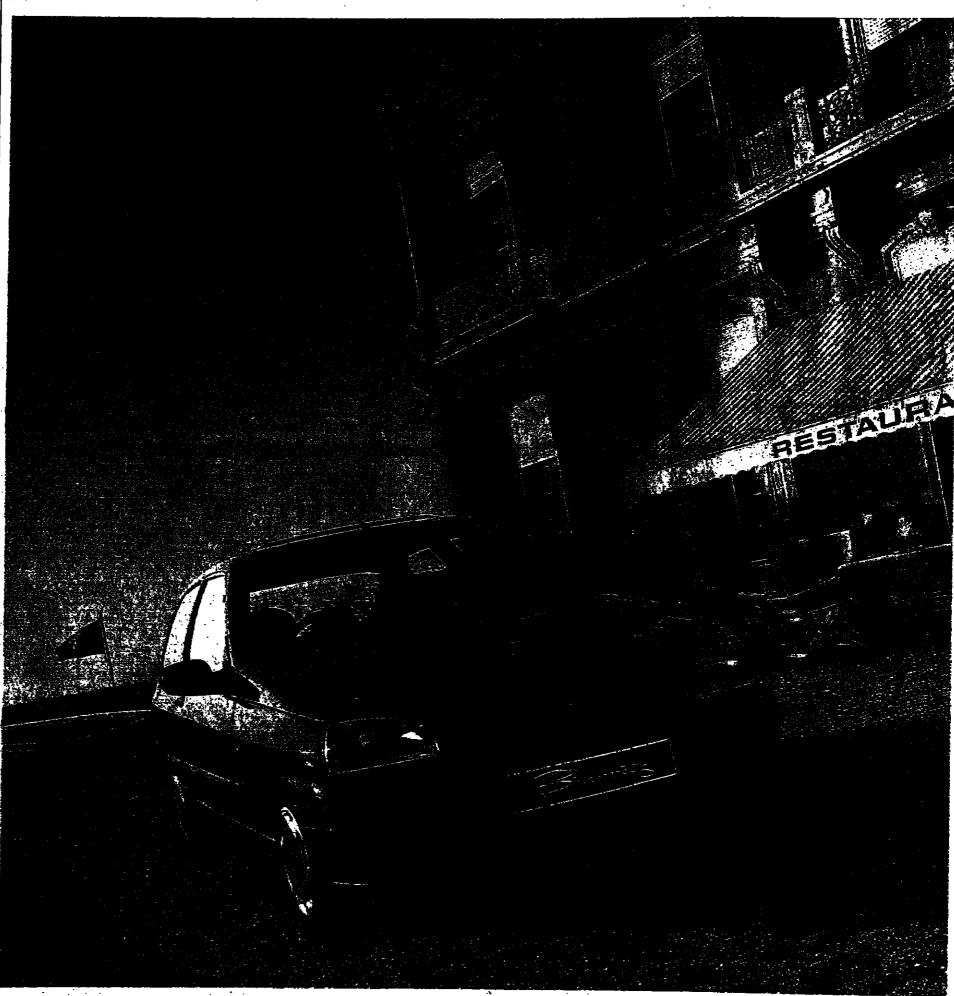
During its three-week life cycle, a female flea lays up to 500 eggs, which drop off the cat and can lie dormant for eight months, waiting for a host. After hatching, they die in a frenzy of mating, gorging and egg laving. Mr Bower said that some pet owners assumed they were immune because their homes were clean. "But fleas love nothing better than a nice warm house with deep-pile carpets."

Cat fleas, the most common species, are equally at home on a dog. They cannot live on people, but are happy to snack on any warm-blooded creature, including humans. Rentokil has been called to fumigate offices as well as homes, as people unwittingly carry fleas into work on their clothes. .

Lindy May, a nurse who lives in south London, returned family to find the place jumping, despite the fact that their cat, Bingo, wears a flea collar.

"As soon as we walked in. there were fleas all over us," she said. "When we got into bed, they got into bed with us. We sprayed the house, but it took five weeks to get rid of them."

Mr DeVile said fleas were becoming resistant to some chemical products. "I think that insects will take over the world because whatever we do to try to eradicate them, they



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## Doctors given new guidance on intimate moments

The Royal College of Obstetricians and said: "There are some doctors who out of Gynaecologists is calling for a series of changes in the way intimate examinations are carried out. The move is a response to reports that women are frequently left timate examinations, which doctors may traumatised, angry and confused by the ex- be doing on automatic pilot. It may be perience.

Among the most radical of the suggestions is for a chaperone to be present regardless of whether the doctor is male or female. "Chaperones are the ultimate safeguard for the patient against abuse during examination," the college advises.

The new guidelines aim to make women more at ease and are a response to a directive from the British Medical Association to the Royal Colleges to establish standards of good practice.

Doctors have been advised not to discuss a woman's body weight until after she has dressed, even if it has a relevance to her gynaecological problems. They have also been warned about being patronising.

Dr Patricia Crowley, the chairman of the committee that produced the guide,

habit call patients 'dear' or 'love' and it

could be interpreted as condescending ... "It is particularly important during inopen to misinterpretation, so it is a time to be more formal."

To underline the point, the guidelines while the examination is being carried out. stress: "It should be very clear to the patient that any questions asked during the examination are entirely technical, relating to the site and quality of the pain, and that the women's feelings and sexual response are not being discussed."

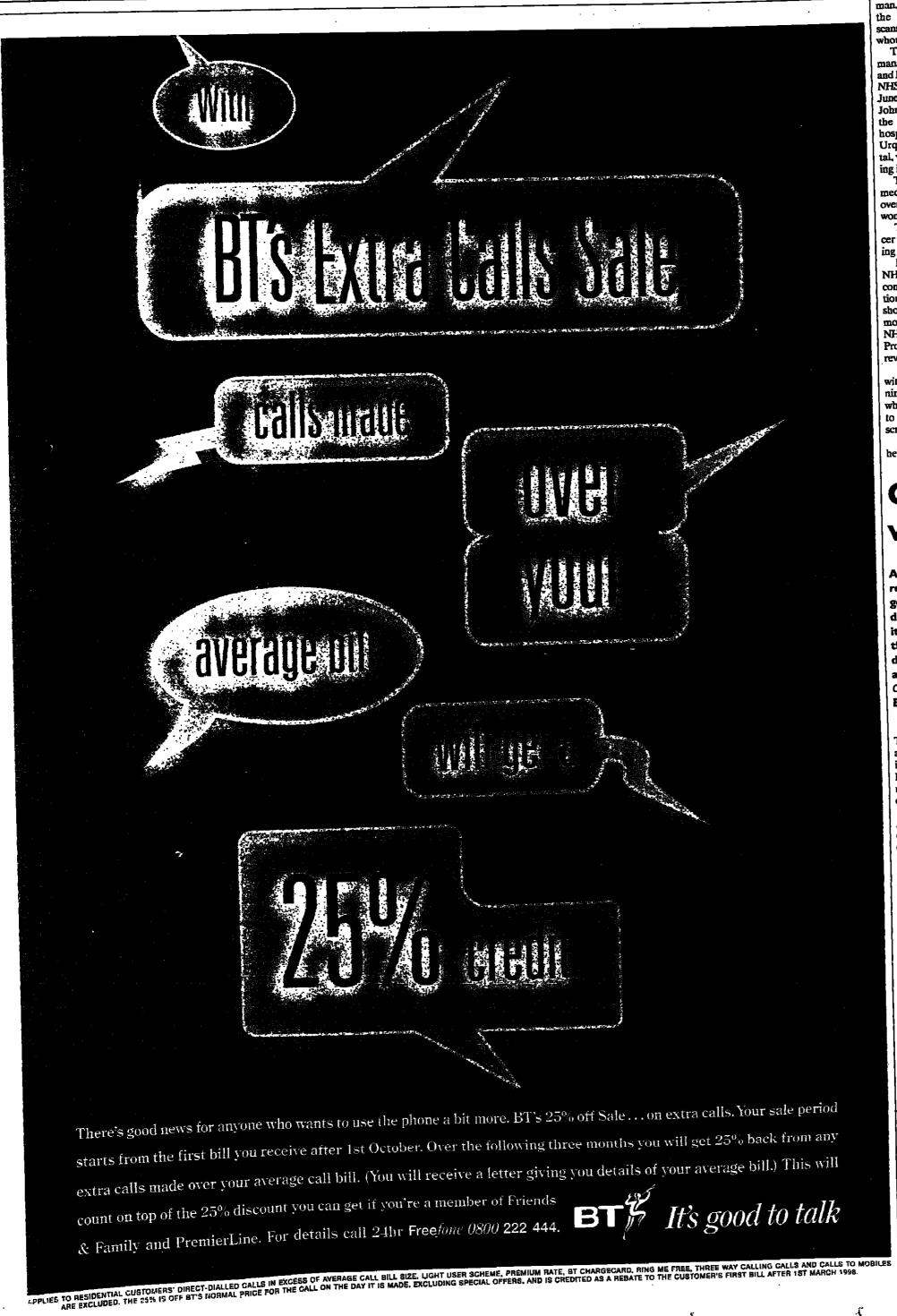
Dr Crowley added that much of the information in the report was common sense but had never been formally written down before.

The report also addresses the controversial issue of training medical students conducting intimate examinations, which Dr Crowley said had to be carefully balanced with the need not to exploit the woman patient.

— Ian Burrell



What a carry on: Doctors are being warned of the need for formality during intimate procedures



## Breast scan consultants face censure

Two consultants at the centre of a breast screening alert are expected to be criticised in a report to the Commons today. Genda Cooper examines the lessons learned from a health crisis which affected thousands of women.

Frank Dobson, the Secretary of State for Health, ordered the review of the East Devon Breast Screening Service by a team of experts led by the Chief Medical Officer, Sir Kenneth Calman, following concerns over the interpretation of breast scans of nine women, two of whom have died.

The six-year-old EDBSS is managed by the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital Healthcare NHS Trust, which announced in June that its two consultants, Dr John Brennan, employed by the Royal Devon and Exeter hospital, and Dr Graham Urquhart, from Torbay hospital, were to have further training in breast screening.

The alert began after NHS medical staff raised concerns over 12 mammography films of women screened by the service. The women developed can-

cer between the initial screening and before routine recall. During hospital treatment, NHS medical staff expressed concern about the interpretation of tiny calcium deposits shown on the original mam-

NHS National Breast Screening Programme in Nottingham to review the 12 scans. Problems were identified nine of the women, two of whom later died. The alert led to the review of almost 4,000

mogram film, and asked the

screenings. About 2,000 women called

Trust, the Exeter and Plymouth Nuffield hospitals where Dr Brennan also worked, and a private hospital in Torquay where both consultants also worked.

Stop butto for music cassettes

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The women at the centre of the alert were among 60,000 screened by the EDBSS over a five-year period. The Calman report is ex-

pected to say that the two consultants used outmoded and inappropriate treatment for abnormal test results. Possible future changes could include increasing the number of mammograms by re-

ducing checks from every three to every two years. But the cost of this change may prove prohibitive in the cash strapped National Health Service. Some doctors fear that the two consultant radiologists will

be made scapegoats and blamed for the problem as a quick fix political solution which would appease the public's The Calman report will re-

veal that there is room for improvement in general organisational and personal performances in the East Devon service. The Government must now

decide whether to spend more cash on a national review of the service. It could also decide to order independent monitoring of the breast screening service.

Meanwhile, the two radiologists will probably face disciplinary action by their healthcare trusts over their role in the affair.

The two radiologists have refused to comment about the inquiry findings from their respective homes in Devon. But it is understood they rejected as "invalid, inaccurate and unsubstantiated" personal with interpretation of films of criticisms levelled in a draft report. And it is thought they angrily reject any suggestions that they were "uncaring".

The Department of Health and the Devon Trusts also rehelplines set up by the RDE fused to comment last night.

## Gene link claimed with intelligence

A UK-based researcher reckons he has found a gene that helps determine intelligence. Is it a vital contribution to the 'nature v nurture' debate, or a muddying of already confused waters? Charles Arthur, Science Editor, reports.

The discovery of a gene which appears to contribute to general a Channel 4 Equinox prointelligence is a finding which Professor Robert Plomin says marks a breakthrough in scientific endeavour.

But Professor Plomin, an American based at the Institute of Psychiatry in London, faces opposition from both scientific and other groups who say that his work is unethical and should not be continued. They say that the availability of genetic testing will lead inevitably to prenatal evaluation of people's intelligence – and in some cases to their being needlessly labelled subnormal.

Yet the results themselves are controversial. They have not yet been published in any scientific journal, though it is understood they are being considered by Nature. That means they have not been reviewed independently for any faults in the testing used.

Furthermore, the gene identified by Professor Plomin,

which is called IGF2R, on chromosome 6, has long been known to genetic researchers. But they have identified it as being involved in some way in prenatal growth - hence its name, "insulin-like growth factor 2 receptor". Mutations in this gene are linked to increased incidence of liver cancer, leading other scientists to conclude that it acts as a tumour suppressor in its normal role.

It has never been associated before with intelligence. But on gramme to be broadcast tonight, Professor Plomin says that his six-year study shows that IGF2R occurs more frequently in smart children than average ones.

David King, editor of GenEthics News and the instigator of the "Campaign for Real Intelligence", has sought to stop MRC funding for Professor Plomin's work. "It will make people believe that everything we are is determined by our genes," he said.

If confirmed, however, Professor Plomin's work seems certain to reopen a long-running argument. Jonathan Glover, philosopher at Oxford University, says: "Anyone can ignore a new piece of science for a contain amount of time, but the the problems start to catch with us. This raises huge and portant issues which, in democracy, we should be cussing now."

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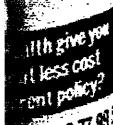
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## Stop button for music cassettes

Little more than a decade after the first compact disc players went on sale, heralding the death of the vinyl record, the last rites are being read over its sidekick, the cassette tape.

Pre-recorded tapes, which made music affordable for students and the less well off, are gradually being phased out by the recording industry, which hopes that consumers will switch to the latest generation of digital technology.

The amount of music available on cassette, whether old classics or new releases, has dwindled steadily. According to data from the British Phonographic Institute, only 19 per cent of new albums are now released

on tape, compared to 65 per cent in 1989. Record shops, where cassettes are squeezed into ever smaller corners, say that while consumers still want to buy tapes, many recordings are not produced any more in the cheap format.

The new version is a small disc, about half the size of a CD, on which music of digital quality can be recorded as well as played. Sony's version is called the MiniDisc, while Phillips has produced the digital compact cassette. The companies also own two of the world's largest recording labels.

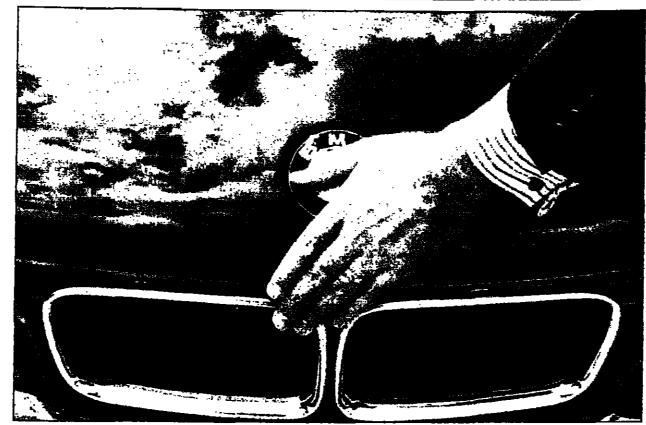
So far, the technology has been slow to take off in this country. As with compact discs, consumers need to buy new stereo equipment in order to use it.

The hardware being launched by electronics manufacturers ranges in price from £199.99 to £699.99.

Sony, which is to spend £5m on promoting the new systems in Britain in the next few months, believes that its MiniDiscs could make traditional tapes obsolete. The company points out that in Japan, 60 per cent of all hi-fi systems use MiniDiscs instead of cassettes.

Record shops say that popular titles such as the Beatles' White Album and Vivaldi's Four Seasons are no longer available on tape. Gillian Rodney, duty manager of Tower Records in central London, said yesterday that customers often requested recordings that were no longer made. "As a policy, we try to stock everything, but it appears that record companies are not producing cassettes like they used to."

--- Kathy Marks



Ultimate sales machine: 'Prestige brands have benefited from economic recovery at the expense of volume products'

## **BMW** sets limit on its own success

The BMW is becoming such a common sight on British roads that the German company has decided to cap its sales next year. Chris Godsmark, **Business Correspondent,** finds prospective buyers could face a long wait for their keys.

The dilemma for BMW is one most car-makers would die for. Its British sales have risen so fast in the past two years that the company is worried the famous brand could be devalued to little more than an upmarket ver-

sion of Ford or Vauxhall.

more than 3 per cent of the entire market. It has turned the UK into BMW's third most important market overall, and its course to reach a record

In August alone, a record 19,764 BMWs were registered in Britain, a rise of 30 per cent in 1981. Most garages had sold out of stocks long before the Rregistrations turned a wheel.

115,000 this year.

So concerned has BMW become by the figures that it has

themselves. This year, BMW's dation". In practice, this means when, for just a little more British operation expects to that the company does not money, they can drive a BMW sell 62,000 cars - enough to grab want the increase to continue unabated and has set itself an internal limit of 70,000 sales as its absolute maximum.

"This is a question of balsecond biggest export earner af- ancing our brand image. We number but it would damage

The scale of the increase has even surprised BMW itself. Two years after the launch of the on the year before and more 5-series saloon, thought by than the company's entire sales many in the industry to be the most accomplished of all contenders in the "executive" bracket, sales are running almost 40 per cent ahead of 1996. Put simply, buyers no longer

or an Audi.

The popularity of the 5-series speaks volumes for the transformation in the British car market, which has seen Ford's share plunge so far this year to ter the US, where sales are on could set a target of twice that just 18 per cent. The 5-series has surpassed all its competitors as our brand," said a spokesman. the best-selling executive saloon, including the Rover 800, Vaux-

hall Omega and Ford Scorpio. BMW puts the surge down to the boom in company profits, which has encouraged directors to change their cars more often or move further and further upmarket. "Prestige brands have clearly benefited from the economic recovery, at called for what managers de- want to be seen in offerings the expense of volume prod-The numbers speak for scribe as a period of "consoli- from "volume" manufacturers ucts," said the company.

## Computer burglars spread net

a new way to find out when your home computer will be unguarded: ring you up and ask. Charles Arthur, Science Editor, explains why a computer survey offering free software is something you can do without

"Hello, I'm carrying out a survey on behalf of a major software supplier. Do you own a computer at home? You could be eligible for free software if you take part in our survey..."

Tempting words, but an independent group has warned that the only survey being carried out is of whether you'll be at home during the day. If not, you'll get an unwelcome visit from burglars.

ister (ICR), a consumer protection group focussing on the Internet in the UK, says it has learnt of seven home burglaries over the past two months, each preceded by a bogus telelived near the M6, in Staffordshire, Yeovil and Cheshire.

the Internet for Britons who give out their phone numbers in discussion group postings or Web and get more information."

The burglars then zero in to computers are and when they will be unguarded.

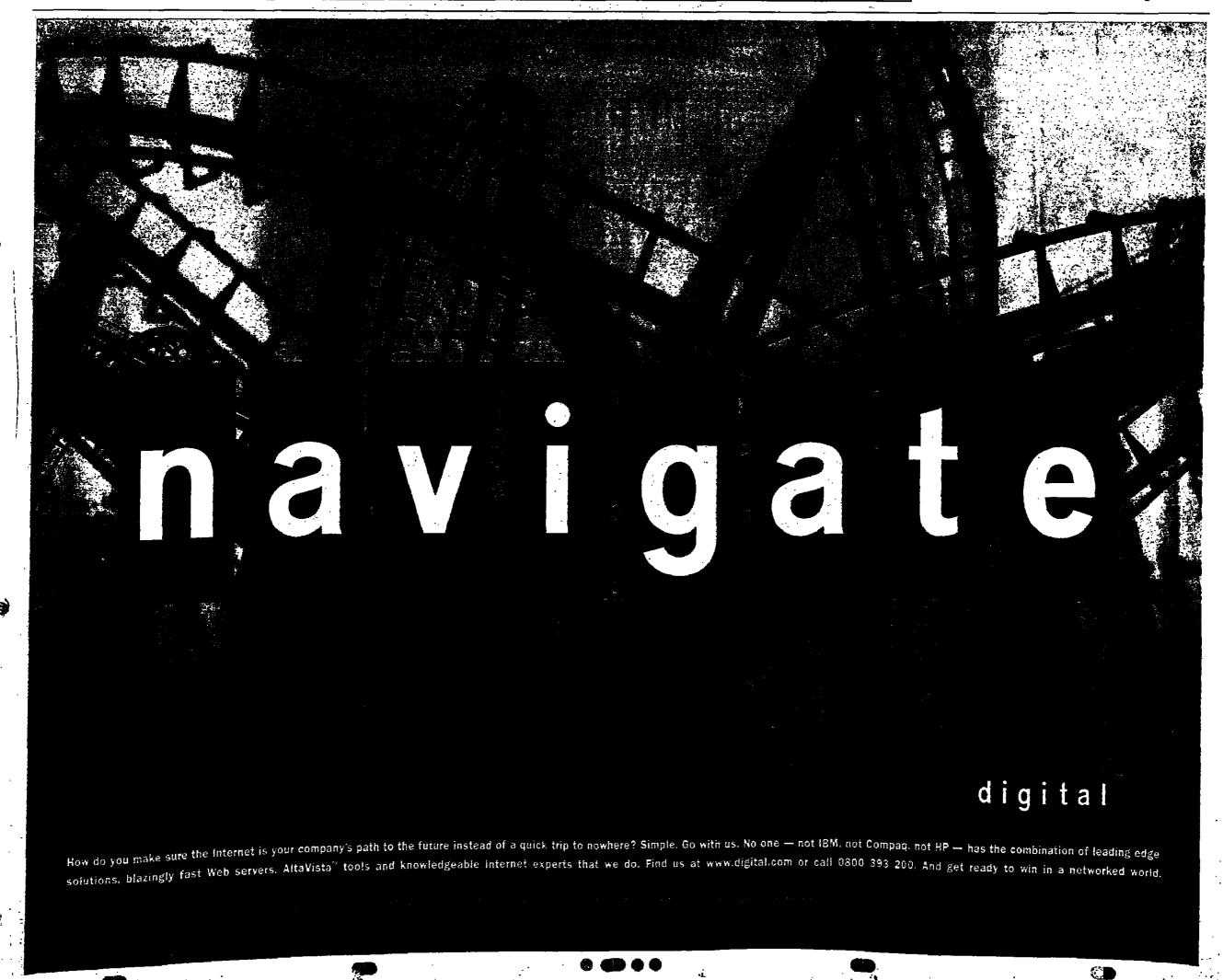
Burglars have discovered Yard, the ICR says: "The questionnaire appears to be pretty routine - inadvertently, you will be providing information about your working hours. nightlife, your computer equipment and your net worth to a burglar. It would appear that people are being burgled within a couple of days of receiving one of these survey calls."

Sometimes the burglars target more than one person in a company. "We heard about a case where one person was burgled in this fashion after receiving a call at work. A couple of days later someone else at his workplace got the same call but because he had heard about the other person, he didn't give out anything."

The key information that the thieves are really looking for is the answer to questions like "Would it be convenient if we come along tomorrow at about, say, 11am to install your free The Internet Content Reg- software?" If the answer is no, that offers the perfect opportunity for a fruitful break-in.

The ICR suggests that if you receive one of these calls: do not provide any personal information about you, your lifestyle or phone survey. All the victims your computer equipment; try dialling 1471 immediately after the call to obtain the telephone Martin Hawkes of the ICR number of the caller, and, make said: "They seem to be trawling a note of anything strange and contact your local police or the ICR with as much information - date, time and mannerisms, sites. Then they contact them strange questions - as you have available.

If you have already received try to find how valuable their such a call, contact your local police, and advise the ICR so it can update its records. The In a formal warning, which ICR is on 01782 506916 or it has checked with Scotland www.internet.org.uk.



## 8/WORLD NEWS

## Jiang admits mistakes over **Tiananmen**

President Jiang Zemin of China was set to leave US shores last night after a visit that took him from coast to coast and back again, but left Americans as sceptical as ever about China's intentions. But towards the end of his visit there were signs he was getting their message, as Mary Dejevsky reports.

At Harvard University on Saturday the penny finally seemed to drop. After a had been only justification. cliche-ridden chronicle of The "correct conclusions" China's achievements, from had been drawn: the govthe invention of gunpowder erument had to act to preto the victory of Mao's revo- serve stability and unity in a Jution. Mr Jiang said he country of 1.2 billion people. would take questions.

to charges that they had who condemned China as be-China-sympathisers, did their tory" on political dissent. best. With shouts of protest- Next day Mr Jiang seemed to ers from outside the hall au-soften a little, when he talked dible, they picked two to Asia specialists about the questions from the hundred need to improve democracy they said they had received. and the rule of law in China. The first asked about the army's assault on Tianan- by many China-watchers as men Square eight years ago, comparable with Deng Xithe second about Tibet, the aoping's epic visit in 1979, third - taken, apparently at when his smiles and spon-Mr Jiang's impromptu insti- taneity won many hearts. Mr gation, from the floor - about I liang left an impression of efhis understanding of American-style democracy.

But it was the first that sig-tle warmth. nalled the change. True, the Chinese leader spent most of his answer defending his own US hi-tech and the New York efforts - as mayor of Shang- Stock Exchange, Mr Jiang hai and national leader - to may also have taken back find out about people's con- some of his hosts' questions cerns and he did not mention about China. If so, Americans Tiananmen Square. But then may in time come to regard he said: "It goes without say- his trip more charitably as ing ... we may have short- time well spent.

comings and even make some mistakes ... However, we have been working on a constant basis to further improve our work."

There, for the first time, in answer to a question about Tiananmen, was an admission of error. The connection was not direct but it was there to be made - perhaps the first time the word "mistake" had crossed a Chinese leader's lips in that context.

It was said US officials had tried time and again to convince Mr Jiang to express at least regret for the Tiananmen events. At his press conference with President Bill Clinton on Wednesday there

This led him into dis-The professors, sensitive agreement with Mr Clinton, packed the audience with ing "on the wrong side of his-

Mr Jiang's tour was seen ficiency, some potentially valuable trade deals, but lit-

But there is just a chance, that, with his impressions of



Trigger happy: Viktor Chernomyrdin, the Russian Prime Minister, joining in celebrations in the Urals city of Izehvsk to mark the 50th anniversary of the invention by Mikhail Kalashnikov of the AK-47 assault rifle Photograph: Reuters

Greek-Turkish rivalry takes centre stage at Balkans summit

## US votes on nitty-gritty of daily life

Americans vote tomorrow, not for a president (that was last year), nor for Congress (next year), but for state governors, mayors and statutes in ballots that are the very stuff of local

The West and South lead the way in referendums, with a number of contentious issues to be decided. In Oregon, voters must decide whether they stand by their vote three years ago to support euthanasia, while the neighbouring state of Washington will consider the medical

Leaders of the Balkan countries

arrived on Crete for a summit

aimed at building economic

co-operation but dominated by

expected talks between long-

time rivals. The Turkish Prime

use of marijuana. Houston, Texas, will become the first big city to vote whether to scrap its policy that gives preference to women and members of ethnic The races are especially close in minorities for public-service the two states where the govjobs and grants.

In New York, Rudolph Giuliani, the Republican mayor, is stopped in New Jersey yesterexpected to be given another day to rally support for the Defour-year term for bringing safety and new life to a city seen in the past as ungovernable. His Democratic challenger, Ruth Messinger, is seen as offering no

As so often, New York is the over high property taxes and exception here. Many other contests are seen, even at this late stage, as too close to call.

President Bill Clinton mocratic challenger, Jim McGreevey. He is hard on the heels of the present - and first female - governor, Christine Todd Whitman, by dint of tapping into popular discontent

car-insurance rates. Ms Whitpersonal property - are also the

country is undergoing a period Simitis today. Relations be-Mr Yilmaz was followed by of increasing tension with the tween Greece and Turkey have the Albanian Prime Minister Greek hosts, was among the first Fatos Nano and the Yugoslav deteriorated in recent weeks. Athens has accused Turkey of President Slobodan Milosevic, Yilmaz is expected to hold numerous military violations leaders of neighbouring counbilateral meetings with the of its airspace, coinciding with tries at odds over the ethnical-Minister Mesut Yilmaz, whose Greek Prime Minister Costas joint Greece-Cyprus war games. ly flammable region of Kosovo.

man's major achievement - cutting state taxes by 30 per cent in her first two months of office four years ago - has proved less of a vote-swinger than her camp hoped, even though it made her a model for Republican governors across America. The race for state governor is just as tight in Virginia, where local taxes this time an unpopular state tax which assesses cars as taxable

## Jakarta culls banks in IMF deal to salvage economy

Indonesia today announces details of deregulation measures aimed boosting the economy after closing 16 banks in a quick start on an IMF-backed economic-reform programme. Sources said several of the banks liquidated on Saturday were associated with politically well-connected business figures, including members of President Subarto's family.

The banking and financial sectors are key areas for reform under a package agreed with the IMF, World Bank. Asian Development Bank and individual donors. Indonesia went to the IMF last month to stabilise the tumbling rupiah and restore confidence in financial markets, battered by currency turmoil across South-East Asia. - Reuters

#### Voyage of hope

A ship packed with 800 illegal immigrants, including 200 women and children, arrived in the south Italian port of Santa Maria Di Leuca. The Hussan Beirut was carrying Turks. Pakistanis, Egyptians and people of other nationalities. Port officials said there were so many people on board that there was standing room only on the decks and below. A number needed medical assistance but there were no immediate reports of serious injuries.

#### Brazil's wayward rocket

Controllers had to destroy the first rocket launched in Brazil when an engines failed to ignite, inflicting a blow on the country's budding space programme. The launch vehicle quickly disappeared in cloudy skies above the Alcantara base in the north-eastern state of Maranhao. It was to have carried Brazil's second data-gathering satellite into orbit to collect information on the environment.

#### Japan, Russia talk peace

President Boris Yeltsin of Russia and the Japanese Prime Minister, Ryutaro Hashimoto, winding up informal talks, pledged yesterday to seal a peace treaty by 2000.

A territorial dispute has for decades blocked the signing of a treaty formally ending Second World War hostilities but the leaders said their talks in Krasnoyarsk heralded a new era of co-operation. Mr Hashimoto said the negotiations would be based on the 1993 Tokyo Declaration, which called for resolution of the dispute based on international law and justice. On Saturday the two men unveiled a plan comprising initiatives to boost Japanese investment in Russia and co-operation in trade, energy, transport and training. - Reuters

#### Vatican in repentant mood

The Vatican said anti-Jewish Christians offend God and told Catholics to admit past errors against the Jews and not repeat them. The stand against was delivered at the end of a symposium on the religious roots of anti-Judaism. It followed a speech by the Pope, who on Friday told the theologians that many Christians failed to live up to their faith when the Nazis set about exterminating Europe's Jews. - Reuters

### The corperative bank

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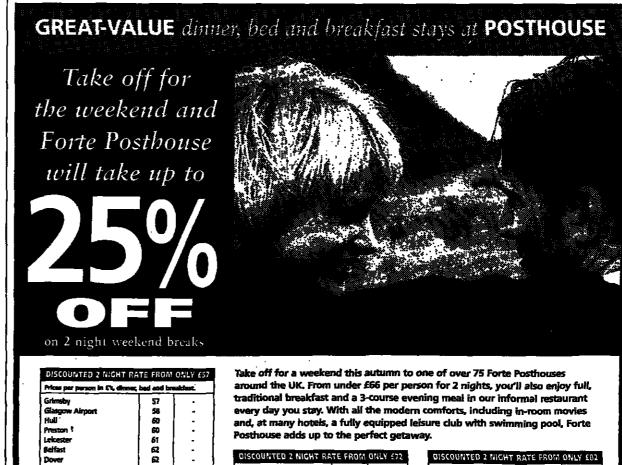
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major high street bank: 24-hour telephone banking and access to 14,000 LINK cash machines. There's also our unique service guarantee which means should we make an error, we'll sort it out, say sorry, and credit your account with £10. If all this sounds like something you'd like to be part of, call us free today. By joining us you

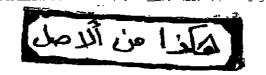
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## 9/EUROPEAN NEWS

MONDAY 3 NOVEMBER 1997

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Cornwell explains, a key theme will be making Europe more accountable, and more relevant to its citizens.

Robin Cook today sets

Britain's presidency of

the European Union

i January. As Rupert

which starts on

out the agenda for

"Britain has a mission as presiin a keynote speech to the In-senior Cabinet minister generstitute of European Affairs in ally seen as being less persuaded Dublin-and jobs, crime, and the of the single currency's virtues and global warming. environment are just three areas than the Chancellor. in which the Foreign Secretary believes that the EU can and ing role" in Europe to which the of which the Foreign Secretary must become a real factor in the Blair government aspires,

on the European stage last sign up to the euro. Chancellor Cook's diplomatic skills, how-May, the Government has com- Helmut Kohl's readiness to give ever, will be preventing the plained that Europe and its in- even a non-member Britain a stitutions were insufficiently seat on the board of the future Greece and Turkey over Cyprus democratic, over-preoccupied European central bank may sug- from poisoning the entire enwith arcane issues like monetary gest the strategy is already pay- largement process.

If Britain is to play the "lead-

rates will be taken.

EU belongs to the

people, says Cook

daily lives of ordinary people. Labour must convince its part-Ever since Mr Blair's debut ners of its sincerity in wanting to

union, and dangerously out of ing off, but other countries have touch with issues that really still to be convinced. exercised public opinion.

Britain also argues that Like Gordon Brown a week EMU will be much more easily ago, Mr Cook will make un- sold to sceptical publics (inequivocally clear that while cluding Germany, where a clear Britain will not be among the majority does not want to sureuro founders, the Govern- render the Deutschemark), if ment aims to bring sterling into Europe can show itself capable the single currency as soon as of bringing tangible economic possible and will do everything benefits, notably more jobs.

to facilitate the EMU launch during its presidency, during month's employment summit in which crucial decisions such as Luxembourg, whose concluthe setting of entry exchange sions will be fleshed out during the UK presidency. Mr Cook is The message may not be also promising a stepped up EU dent to give Europe back to the new, but is no less important for campaign against crime and people," Mr Cook will declare that - especially coming from a drug trafficking, and more forceful European policies on issues like atmospheric pollution

> The other overarching theme will be EU enlargement, will again today spell out Britain's abiding support.

The biggest test of Mr worsening dispute between

## British seat at Euro bank set to raise hackles

Helmut Kohl wants to ease Britain's late entry into monetary union with the promise of a seat at the European Central Bank, But his plans are set to cause resentment among other governments which fear that their efforts to qualify on time could now go unrewarded. Katherine Butler predicts trouble ahead.

It is legally possible but politically unsustainable. That is how many Brussels observers view reports from Bonn signalling into circulation. As a reward, that Chancellor Kohl wants to Britain's EU partners would reserve a place for Britain leave a place vacant on the exaround the table of the world's ecutive board of the future Eumost powerful independent ropean Central Bank when it is central bank.

not to make any public comment on the proposals, partly because of worries about how other countries, which might also hope to be in the elite club. could react. The suggestion appears to have come from Mr sponsible for Germany's most be pleased if Britain joins "at the earliest possible moment".

At his recent meeting with Tony Blair, Mr Kohl was relaxed the plan is that there are only about British delays. German six scats on the board - but the officials said he told his host: 11 countries which want to join "We are not worried if you do in 1999 and are likely to qualinot join immediately. We understand your problems." This conciliatory tack seems to be on the composition of the board based on the German perception that a partly enthusiastic out from EMU in 1999. "This Britain is better than an unen- has very little chance of getting thusiastic one and that a Britain which catcalls from the margins ECB's executive board will be could still be damaging to the future of the "European idea". What the German leader

and his advisers want is to entice Mr Blair into a commitment that Britain will join in 2002, when Euro notes and coins go established next year, The emp-Germany has been cautious ty chair would have a British flag on it, and the place would go to a senior representative of the Bank of England from the date

of Britain's entry. From Britain's point of view, the idea of a vacant slot with a "reserved for Britain" sign on Kohl's office, which is often reit would allay fears that the UK

Austria will be vying to fill that could be shut out of monetary decision-making. But Italy, now in a bid to represent the "south" sensure to teign-poncy expected to qualify for the 1999 but that would leave Italy out ated at the weekend, remains first wave of EMU, would view in the cold if Britain had also to merely that Germany would such a move with particular be accommodated.

dismay, because it could rob Rome of its own "rightful" seat at the table. The biggest flaw in fy will be competing for places.

Britain will not have a vote

because it is exercising its optthrough" said a source. The responsible for day-to-day implementation of the federalised monetary policy underpinning the single currency. It will be composed of a president, expected to be Wim Duisenberg, the Dutch president of the bank's forerunner, the European Monetary Institute, a vicepresident and four others.

Assuming Mr Duiscnberg is appointed president and Germany and France are represented, that leaves three seats to be fought over by eight possible candidates. One scenario which rests on the need to strike a political balance suggests that an appointee to represent small countries would be necessary. Ireland, Finland and

## Lorry drivers prepare to paralyse France

Truckers began assembling barricades across France last night after negotiations aimed at preventing a strike broke down despite a late intervention by the French government. Ian Burrell reports that the dispute is likely to be even more debilitating than last year's.

A giant tourniquet in the form of thousands of truckers' rigs parked back-to-back was being applied to the major arteries of the French transport system last night.

At border crossings, ferry ports and fuel depots, the lorries were being assembled into blockades designed to choke French commerce.

Late on Saturday night, the French Prime Minister, Lionel Jospin, attempted to halt the dispute with the offer of a new salary package, equivalent to a 5 per cent pay rise for drivers, but it was not enough to divert the course of the trucking unions as they headed towards strike action.

Last night the unions, who are also and meat produce in the shops," he said. seeking improvements in working hours and conditions, seemed determined to punish employers who they believe reneged on agreements reached after last year's strike, which crippled the country for 12 days.

Blockade beater: A British trucker makes it through the fog to Calais yesterday to catch a ferry for home before the strike begins Photograph: Brian Harris agreement of November 27 1996," said rather than get caught for a week," he said.

Eric Forissier, a union leader in Lyon. "Now we ask ourselves what their word is worth, and that's why we are taking action tonight."

By early last evening, lorry drivers had blockaded regional fuel depots at Reims, Poitier, Bordeaux, Rouen, La Rochelle, Tours, Beziers. Lille and Bayonne, ahead of the 10pm national road blockade.

Their actions led to a frenzy of activity at petrol stations. "They might have legitimate demands," said Philippe Parmentier. a technology consultant, who was filling his tank in Paris. "But to take the whole population hostage, that's not right."

During negotiations this week, employers have argued that they have already fulfilled their commitments in last year's agreement, including lowering truckers' retirement age to 55, reducing their working hours and raising their pay.

Daniel Hodges of the Road Haulage Association estimated that up to 200 British lorry drivers might get enmeshed in the blockade. "It is difficult to judge how bad it could be, but if the blockades last more than a few days then we may see a shortage of vegetables, cheese, wine

However, Geoff Dossetter of the Freight Transport Association said he was confident that most British truckers would have escaped from France before the strike began. "Some of them will have broken the normal Sunday ban on lorry driving The owners "did not respect the in France and paid the 600FF fine (£60)

## "CLOSE YOUR EYES AND IMAGINE...

You are strapped in a wheel chair to stop you falling out. You are unable to move

your legs, your body, your arms, your hands or your head. You can't move any

of your facial muscles. You can't swallow so that saliva runs unchecked down

your chin. You hear a buzzing: a wasp lands on your cheek. It crawls across

your cheek and up the side of your nose. Now you feel it slowly moving down

the corner of your mouth. It

continues to move up the side of

your face towards your nostrils.

You're unable to call for help

because your throat and tongue

muscles are also paralysed...



Annie Lindsell, Motor Neurone Disease sufferer and supporter of voluntary euthanasia, in a speech at the House of Commons describing the experience of a friend who died of the disease.

NOW IMAGINE THAT IT WILL ONLY GET WORSE. SHOULDN'T YOU HAVE A CHOICE?"

If, like me, you believe in the right of people to choose death with dignity, you can best work for a change in the law, and an end to unnecessary suffering, by supporting the Voluntary Euthanasia Society. Join NOW.

Please make me a member and keep me informed on the campaign. I enclose £10 annual subscription (joint membership £15) made payable to VES.

Please send to Annie Lindsell, Voluntary Euthanasia Society,

13 Prince of Wales Terrace, London W8 5PG.

For Dignity in Dying

## Iraq bars three Americans from UN inspection team

Iraq has ordered American members of the UN's monitoring team to leave the country by Wednesday. Is Iraq right to believe that the UN's search for its weapons of mass destruction is just an excuse to maintain sanctions?

It may be the end of arms inspections as Iraq has known them in the six years since the end of the Gulf war. The rules of the game are already changing, "Iraq today turned away in a polite way three Americans who were with a United Nations arms-inspection team arriving from Bahrain," said a diplomat in Baghdad yesterday.

quarrel is with the US, not the UN. "On Monday there will be no American inside Iraq (taking part) in inspections," said Taha Yassin Ramadan, Iraqi Vice-President and close confidant of President Saddam Hussein. "There is no retreat from our decision until things are put in order," he said.

The US and UK, on the contrary, have repeatedly said that the Iraqi challenge is to the UN as a whole. They do not rule out military action. "US forces are always ready," said General Anthony Zinni, who commands

US forces in most of the Mid- Saddam made extraordinary ation in the Gulf is tense even now. The possibility that operations could be conducted in our region is very real."

Both sides are moving cautiously. But the fact that President Saddam has chosen to provoke a crisis now probably means he is feeling stronger. It is not just that three permanent members of the UN Security Council - Russia, France and China - think that the US and Britain are being too hardline.

It is also that the re-entry of Iraqi tanks into Iraqi Kurdistan BY PATRICK the failure of

the US to re-COCKBURN spond effectively President Bill Clinton

Iraq is emphasising that its ordered missiles to be fired at targets 500 miles from where the Iraqi army was in action ~ showed the limits of what the US was prepared to do.

Iraq has always felt that the UN Special Commission (Unscom) on monitoring weapons of mass destruction was largely an excuse to keep the country isolated. Only when Unscom reported that Iraq had no missiles, nerve gas, chemical weapons or nuclear materials left would the economic siege of Iraq - above all the ban on its oil exports – be lifted.

But at the same President

die East. He added: "The situ- efforts to hide the remains of the programmes he developed in the Eighties - when he was allied to the US against Iran to give Iraq weapons of mass destruction. In 1995 Iraq was still prepared to spend \$2m on gyroscopes taken from Soviet SS-18 missiles and which could only be used as guidance systems for Iraqi rockets.

> In the lead-up to the Gulf war the Iraqi leader was obsessed with a desire to develop nuclear weapons. He had two teams designing a nuclear war-

head. He also stretched version of the Al-Hussein Scud, which could Aviv. But Iraq

never devel-

oped a warhead which could fit on the missiles it had available. It did have chemical and nerve gases available in 1991, but did not dare use them for fear of a retaliatory strike.

When Unscom was first established, Iraq regarded Rolf Ekeus, the Swedish diplomat who was its chief, and David Kay, the UN's chief field officer in Iraq, as wholly under American influence. They played a curious game of catand-mouse with Iraq, as Unpursued hidden equipment and documents from military base to military

Iraq was in substantial compliance with UN resolutions on revealing its weapons of mass destruction. But this was almost immediately contradicted by the defection of General Hussein Kamel, President Saddam's son-in-law and former head of Iraq's military industries. He immediately disclosed that one of Unscom's chief translators was an Iraqi spy.

Uncertain of how much General Kamel would reveal, Iraq planted a million pages of documents on its strategicweapons programme in a chicken farm he owned outside Baghdad. The Unscominspectors noted that, given their place of storage, the papers were amazingly clean. A gardener at the farm casually mentioned to an Arabic-speaking inspector that Iraqi special forces had delivered the papers to the farm a few days before.

President Saddam's determination to preserve a few missiles and some chemical and nerve gasses was always irra-

The only logic behind it was that giving them up would show weakness. He wanted to show that military defeat had not humbled him. But in doing so he provided the US with the excuse it wanted to keep Iraq isolated and maintain its predominance in the Middle East, which had reached its peak with the Gulf war.



Burning issue: Iragis protesting in Baghdad at the offices of the UN Development Programme

#### Effort to restart Palestine peace talks

Israel and the Palestinians head back to the negotiating table in Washington today, with Israel saying "practical progress" can be made but the Palestinians gloomy that it is evading any real issues. "We will take part in the talks, despite the fact that they have no chance," Yasser Arafat was quoted as saying in the Israeli Maariv newspaper.

The talks will be convened under the stern eye of the US the Cabinet authorised him to the Washington talks, and Secretary of State, Madeleine tly to Washington for the Albright, who wants Israel to talks. The foreign ministry commit itself to a "time out" in settlement expansion and the Cabinet to talk about all who is also reportedly pushing for a commitment on the cluding a time-out and West date and scope of an Israeli troop withdrawal from rural West Bank land.

But the Palestinians say they fear the Israeli Foreign Minister, David Levy, leading the delegation, is not authorised to negotiate on those issues. "He can bold talks all day long, but your Cabinet didn't empower him to do a thing." Mr Arafat told Meariv. The talks were held up for

a week while the government debated the positions Mr Levy would take. On Wednesday said he was "empowered by the issues on the agenda." in-Bank withdrawal. A government spokesman said Israel was looking for "practical

progress" in areas such as the opening of a Palestinian airport and seaport in the Gaza Strip, called for in the existing Israel-Palestinian agreements but not yet implemented.

An Arafat adviser, Ahmed Tibi, said the Palestinians would concentrate on settlement activity and the Israeli redeployment - "in other words, the issue of land" - at that all other issues were sec-

If there is no progress on those issues, he told Israel's Army Radio, "the talks are doomed to failure, and we will get sucked into a whirlpool, into the dynamic of a resurgent crisis."

## Conscript tells of Algeria's torture chambers

Reda, a conscript in the Algerian army, says he felt no emotion as he murdered a man at his checkpoint earlier this year. But watching men tortured with an electric drill left him distraught. Only when guerrillas recognised him, he reveals, did he decide to seek asykum in Britain

"They gave us vaccinations in our backs and then told us to inject each other before we went out on sorties. It was an offwhite liquid which we injected into each other's arms. ... It made us feel like Rambo ... We were on a road-block, stopping anyone we suspected of being a terrorist. If a man had a face like a terrorist, if he had a big beard, he was shot. There was a man with a beard walking by the petrol station. I told him to stop. He said 'Why should I stop?

Reda was in London now, but his memory was on a road 20 miles from Algiers. He had been on military service, part of a commando unit outside Blida. "The man was rude, so I

killed him. It's like I was dream- lagers away for torture. "There amus of the prisoners. Then they member it till my friends told chest. When he died, he cried: and the prisoners were all giv-God.' I hope God will forgive me and that all humanity will forgive me." -

Knightsbridge may be an odd place to seek forgiveness wept - for the killings, for the started with the electric drill." torture he witnessed, for the soldiers he believes were murdered by his own army. He began his military service in the town of Skikda, then moved to Biskra for weapon training. "We were told that all people were against us. We were taught how to recognise terrorists - by their beards and khamis robes, their Islamic clothes."

On 12 May this year Reda was flown to Blida, south of Algiers, for active service in the anti-guerrilla war. On his first sortie into the village of Sidi Moussa on 27 May, he and his comrades ordered families from their homes and while searching their houses he says they stole all the money and gold they could find. Reda says the fles and then took 16 male vil-

ing and it wasn't me. I didn't re- was an underground room at the Blida caserne called the me ... The bullets his him in the katellah - the "killing room" -There is only one God but en names by the interrogators, names like Zitouni. The men were bound and stripped and tied to a chair and hosed with cold water. Two soldiers stood in front of each prisoner and but from time to time Reda asked questions. Then they

Reda fidgets with his hands BY ROBERT **FISK** 

as he tells his awful story. The drills were used on the prisoners' legs. Reda says he saw one army torturer drill open a man's stomach. It lasted four hours with each prisoner - if they lived, they were released after a week. At one point in his story, Reda asks his younger brother to leave the room; he doesn't want his family to know what else he has seen. "There was a cable soldiers beat the people with ri- about two inches in diameter and they put it in the ears or

threw water at them. Two of the men began cursing us ... And the torturer would shout Yarabak - God damn vou - so much for your God.' The torture went on 24 hours a day. I was only a conscript. I watched but I didn't take part." Three men died during the

torture session, Reda says. The soldiers told their families they would have to give them 50,000 dinars (£300) if they wanted the their faces (in grief) and we said the men had died of heart attacks but they didn't believe us. The coffins were sealed. They knew we'd killed them."

In June, Reda was asked to participate in a protection force around the same village during a raid by regular troops. "We had to go in if there were flares sent up - but there were no flares and we went home after two hours. Next day ... we heard that in this same village a massacre had taken place and 28 villagers had been beheaded. And that made us start thinking about who did it. I started to think that our people had been the killers."

Two days later, Reda says, he and fellow conscripts were cleaning the barracks and searching the clothes of regular troops for eigarettes when they found a false beard and musk, a perfume worn by devout Muslims. "We asked ourselves, what were the soldiers doing with this beard?" Reda concluded that this army unit may have carried out the Sidi Moussa massacre but his alarm worsened when 26 of his fellow conscripts were driven off to another barracks at Chrea. "They later brought all

their bodies back to us and said that they had been killed in an ambush but I am sure they were executed because they weren't trusted any more. There had been no wounded in the 'ambush'. Maybe they talked too much. All our soldiers knew these men had been eliminated - because earlier, before they were taken away, we were told not to talk to them."

The end of Reda's military career was not heroic. His teeth were kicked out by colleagues he says, and he was imprisoned for a week after he was seen giving bread to prisoners. Then, ambushed while on roadblock duty on the edge of Blida, he was recognised by two armed Islamists. "They were friends of mine and they saw me in my paratroop uniform and my green beret. One of them shouted at me: 'There is plenty of time left in the year to get you. Take care of yourself and your wife and child.' I and three of the other conscripts ran away with the help of locals who gave us civilian clothes. Now I am a deserter and I am between two fires - between the terrorists and

the government." Reda turned up at Heathrow a few weeks later, pleading for protection. The Algerian authorities claim they know him and that he fabricated his story of military atrocities to gain asylum in Britain. But why would Reda seek asylum in Britain in the first place, along with dozens of other members of the Algerian security services? Reda's last news from Algeria speaks for itself: eight relatives in the suburb of Boufarik - not far from Blida - have had their throats cut.





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## 11/ENVIRONMENT

THE INDEPENDENT MONDAY 3 NOVEMBER 1997

## Farms' future found in a handful of beans

Britain's farmers have started trials on a crop which could take over tens of thousands of acres of British

countryside. Oliver Tickell suggests a combination of environmental concern and hard

business sense could lead to a boom in the growth of soyabeans in the UK.

A desperate shortage of protein in the wake of the BSE crisis. and the advent of new crop varieties adapted to Britain's cooler climate and shorter growing season, has prompted British farmers to grow increasing acreages of the soyabean.

Most of the world's sova-

Soyahean Association, are distinctly promising.

A British seed merchant, Robin Appel Ltd, says the re-Two 15-acre plots in southern England planted with a new line of seed bred for British condithe acre.

Edward Wilmot, a spokesman for the company, is optimistic: "There is a huge market out there", he says,

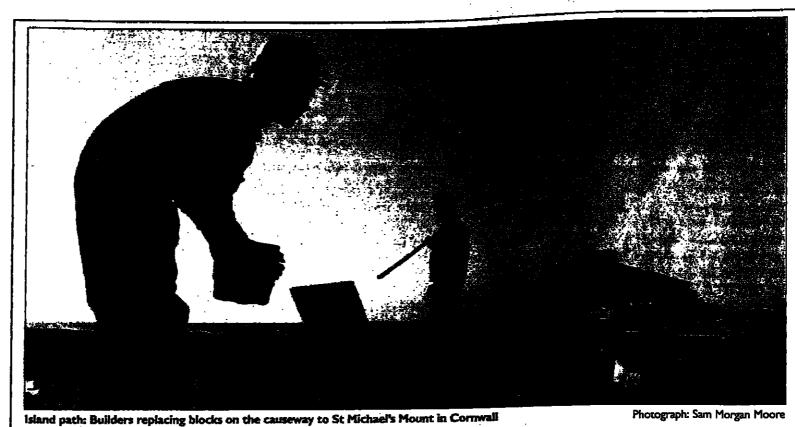
Soyabean Association, manages 970 acres of farmland in vance of science and we know Leicestershire and reports har-some consumers are prepared vesting about a tonne per acre to buy GM products." from a 2.5 acre trial plot.

'And that's on frost-prone land 550ft or so above sea levbeans, a protein-packed veg- el where we can't even grow etable crop, are grown under the maize economically", he says.

eight trial plots have been plant- to its future. "Field beans give cd and harvested in England. In-us roughly 20 per cent protein, dications, according to a newly but soyubeans give twice as formed trade body called the much or more, up to 42 per cent. There's no other crop to match it."

A spokesman for the National Farmers' Union (NFU) sults have been "sensational". said that members would be watching the trials with interest: "If the market is there our members will certainly considtions have yielded 1,200 kilos to er it. Farmers and growers are going to have to look at new products and new methods of production."

He added, however, that the NFU was not advocating Wil Armitage, director of the any crop over another: "We believe you cannot deny the ad-





Beans means cash: Home-grown soya is proving a success with UK farmers Photograph: Rui Vielra

- hot skies of Brazil and the southern United States. De- in soya is as a high-protein mand for the British beans has feed for his prize-winning herd - been increased by widespread consumer unease about genet- Fresians, in the wake of the BSE ically modified (GM) soya- crisis. "Over the last few beans imported from America, which refuses to separate out or

label GM foodstuffs. With soyabeans trading at about £200 a tonne, farmers are interested in soya as a cash crop – whether for animal or human consumption.

Another attraction for farmers is that soyabeans attract an EU subsidy of about £150 an acre when grown on registered arable land. Already, this year,

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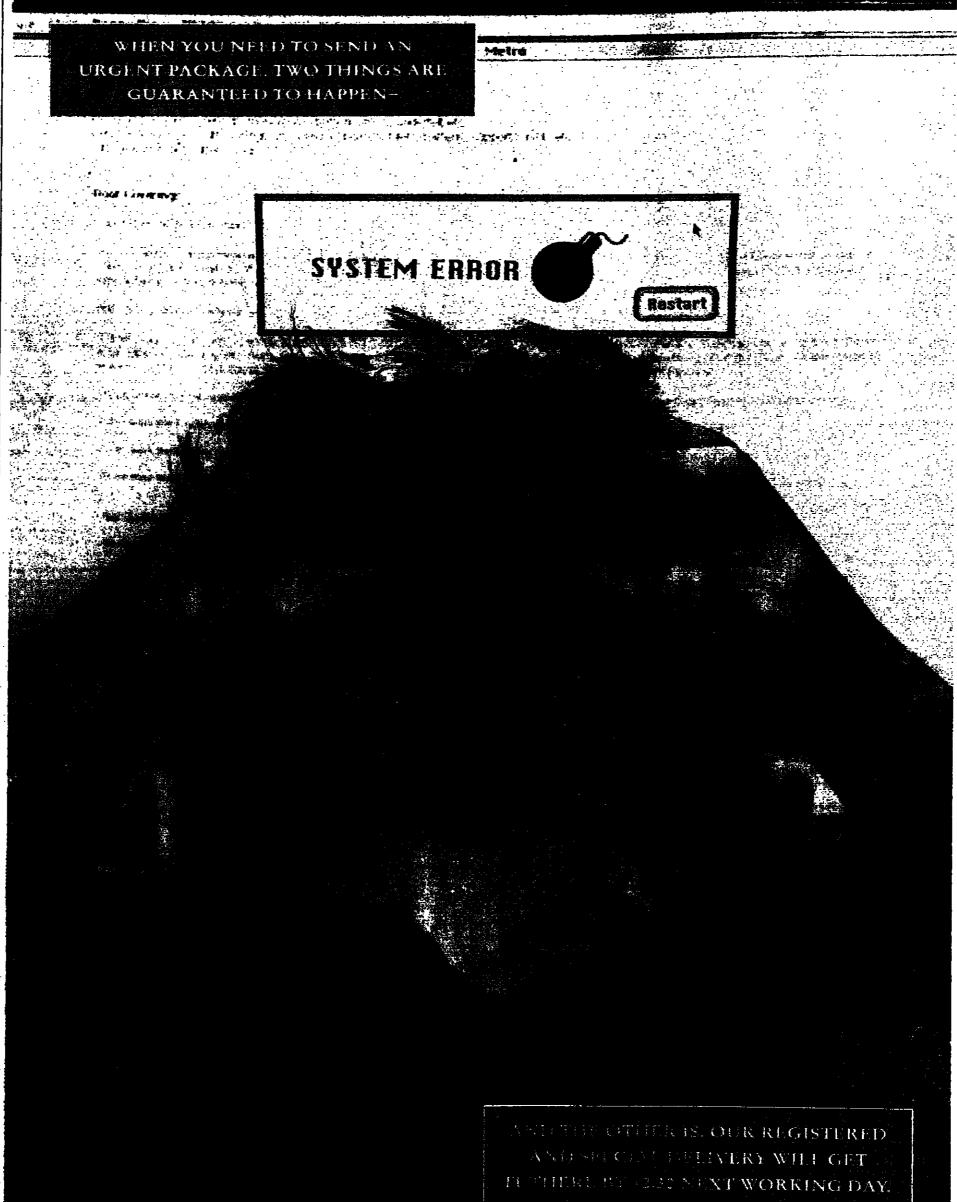
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u loan.

Mr Armitage's main interest of 140 pedigree Holsteindecades bonemeal has provided a superb and extremely cheap form of protein", he

"But now we've lost bonemeal because of BSE, and that's left us with a huge protein deficit. Dairy farmers all over Britain are crying out for low

cost, high quality protein." Simon Broddle, of Nickson seeds in Lincolnshire, believes that soya's high yield is the key

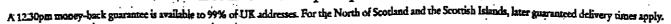




This winter may prove to have devastating consequences for the people of North Korea. For the third consecutive year, a combination of floods and drought has ruined harvests and destroyed homes. In parts of the country, children are already having to live on a diet of tree bark and roots. Without urgent help, many will not survive the bitter cold



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## Saint Michael's most coveted

Marks & Spencer has discovered a secret: women will buy as many velvet shirts as they can produce. Hardly surprisingly, it's not a secret anymore. Holly Davies unravels the tale behind the shirt on everyone's back.

Two winters ago, Gucci mania was at its height. The must-have buys for any self-respecting fashion mavin were a pair of hipster trousers and a luscious velvet shirt. The price for the shirt alone was around £500. The way to wear it

was nonchalantly unbuttoned, as low as you dured. Last winter, Marks & Spencer cottoned on and offered an equally chic - but more forgiving - version. It cost a merc £40 and was an instant success.

Women started huying them by the handful. For the price of one Gucci shirt, you could afford an M&S equivalent in every colour for you and a friend. By Christmas, mothers and daughters were wearing matching shirts. And so were their friends. If you didn't own one yourself, you knew someone who did.

They were originally available in just four different colours. My mum bought one in chocolate, my sister in law hought one in blue, and my aunt bought one in black. I chose to be different and resisted the temptation. Last Christmas was like

being squashed in a jewellery box between four velvet walls. Everyone turned up for Christmas dinner in the same shirt.

Again this year they have appeared on the rails of your local branch of M&S. This season, there is a version in deven velvet too. The problem is they are totally irresistible. chairman of a large travel com-

Every week at London's Marble Arch branch alone, 1,000 of them are bought by women thankful that they have bought a piece of clothing they know they will wear forever and a day. The shirt is equally useful for daytime or night, worn with trousers

or skirts. They cover all the lumps and bumps, they feel comfortable, look glamorous and they wash well.

This shirt cannot lose and

the high street. Other versions include one by Jeffrey Rogers, which at £24.99 is cheaper. and by Karen Millen, made of stretch velvet and in a slimmer cut (£89.95). English Eccentrics have always made a luxury velvet shirt, and theirs start at £180.

Our model, Annabel Freiberg, is a hopeless addict. She owns five M&S variations and still her appetite is insatiable. "I go into Marks & Spencer every two weeks and the only thing I seem to want to buy at the moment is another velvet shirt. I've got my eye on a new one that is slightly different because it's got a devoré velvet cuff and collar, and is a

bit more jackety than the others. I just find them so useful. I like to wear lots of chunky jewellery and the colours of the shirts really complement anything I decide to wear. They are also absolutely brilliant because i go to a lot of

events that I have to attend straight after work and because they are velvet they look dressy enough for the evening."

Janet, 51, is another fan. She bought a chocolate brown shirt last December and has been wearing it ever since. She works shifts and can work in the afternoon or up to midnight:

"It's quite hard to find things to wear. You are stuck between comfy pyjamastyle outfits and shoulder-padded suits, neither of which make you feel smart and comfortable. My velvet shirt crosses both borders." However, you

can have too much of a good thing. The velvet shirt might well become a victim of its own success. As a slightly jaded Janet pointed out: "I would quite like a bottle green one but now that everyone has them I don't

think I'll bother." Debbie is the PA to the pany located just

down the road from the Marble Arch branch, She bought a creamy gold-coloured panne velvet shirt a couple of weeks ago, but is starting to regret it. "I wore it to work the day after I bought it and immediately

into bumped someone in the same shirt. which was really embarrassing. Since then I think I've worn it once to the pub. I figured it would be so dark in there that has been imitated up and down no one could tell anyway."



Hopelessy addicted: Annabel Freiberg has her eye on yet more velvet shirts, which range in price from £40 for the plain velvet and £50 for the devore Photographs: Tony Buckingham

## **FASHION MOMENT**

Fresh from her success as head of the House of Chloe, Stella McCartney bas joined her model pal Kate Moss as fashion plate, photographed by veteran fashion photographer Bruce Weber no less. The 40odd page story appears in this month's fashion glossy. W. Weber apparently joined Stella. Kate and friends Marianne Faithfull and Lucie de la Falaise on a camping holiday and snapped away as Stella strummed her guitar around the camp fire (wearing her own designs), played a few rounds of football, and climbed into her sleeping bag at the end of a hard day's fun. Presumably sustenance was provided in the form of Linda McCartney veggie bangers. It's tough at the top.

Bruce Weber fans can look forward to a major retrospective of his work at the National Portrait Gallery, London W1, opening 20 November. Tamsin Blanchard



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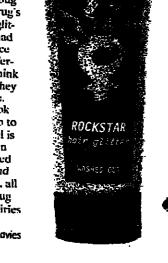
If you haven't been kissed recently, why not make your lips irresistible with Sweet Georgia Brown's Sparklers Lip Gloss. Available in red, black, violet. crystal and as seen here in blue. Make sure you apply the glitter and lip gloss evenly to avoid looking like you are dribbling from one



side of your mouth. Lip gloss £3.95, by Sweet Georgia Brown, available by mail order from Beauty Quest, 0541-505 0000 and Selfridges, Oxford Street, London W1.

You can be a Rockstar, a

Firestarter or a Glitterbug with the aid of Superdrug's brilliant new range of glitter hair products. We had so much fun in the office playing with all the different sprays and gels, I think we can safely say that they are suitable for any age. Go for a super-slick look or just plain silly, it's up to you. The hair-glitter gel is £1.99. Other products in the range include Spaced Out glitter hairspray and metallic hair highlights, all available from Superdrug stores nationwide, inquiries 0171-684 700,



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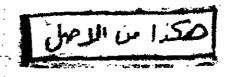
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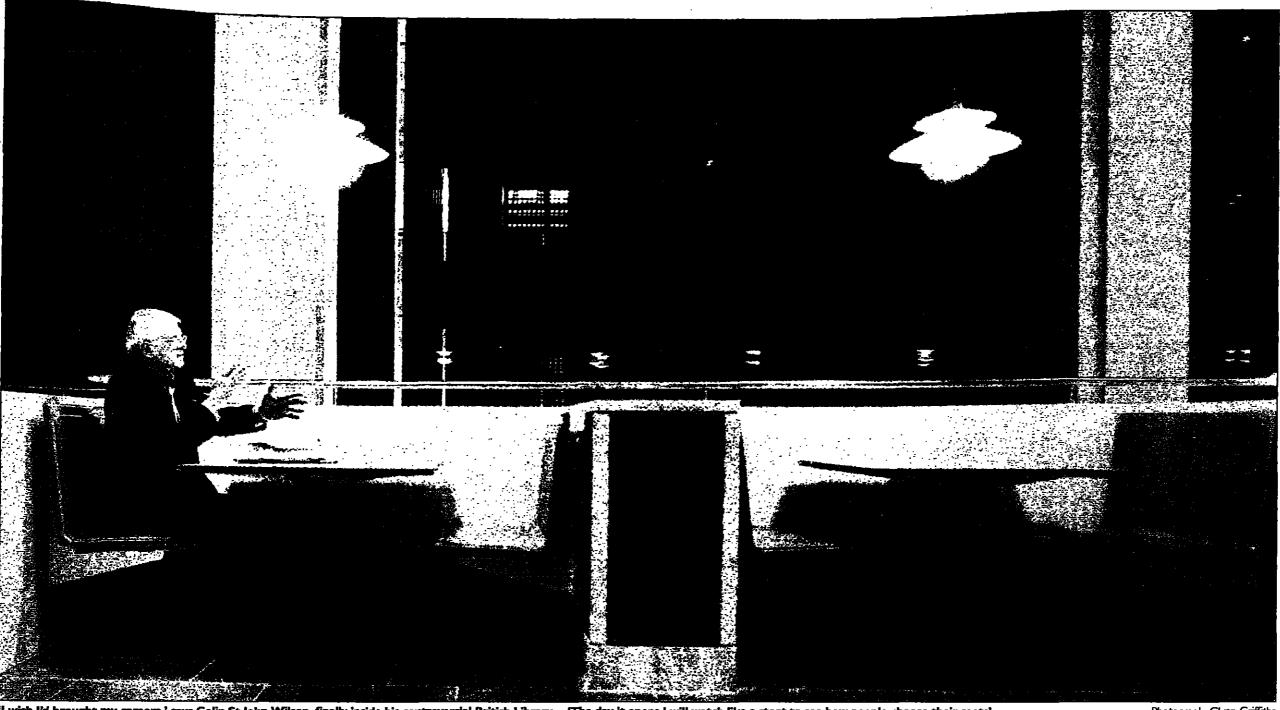
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## 13/INTERVIEW

## Read all about it ... architect finishes Great British Disaster



'I wish I'd brought my camera,' says Colin St John Wilson, finally inside his controversial British Library... 'The day it opens I will watch like a stoat to see how people choose their seats

Photograph: Glynn Griffiths

He's endured more personal abuse than any architect this century, and has had no new commissions for a long time. But Colin St John Wilson, mastermind of the British Library, has no regrets. After all, wasn't Christopher Wren fired before St Paul's was finally finished?

There were two things I was worried about. First, I was late. But so was he. And it was eight years in his case, which made my 15-minute unpunctuality seem paltry. But the other thing was that my expertise in architecture is, well, shall we say limited, and I was there to talk to the man who has, for the past 30 years, engaged in the titanic struggle of creating the most expensive building ever constructed on these

Colin St John Wilson is, in his own words, "the architect of the Great British Disaster". Otherwise known as the British Library, it is to open to readers at the end of this month - some 35 years after the project was first proposed, at a cost of almost five times the original £116m budget and with room for around a mere third of the 3,500 readers and only half the 25 million books originally planned for.

On top of that it is the building that everyone loves to hate. Even before it was built, Prince Charles, in his "monstrous carbuncle" phase, likened it to "an academy for secret policemen". The art critic Jonathan Meades labelled it "a lump of bodging on a cosmic scale". And the House of Commons National Heritage committee compared the huge red-brick building to "a Babylonian ziggurat seen through a funfair distorting mirror" and damned it as "one of the ugliest buildings in the world". But it was not the architecture I wanted to discuss with him, so much as what it has been like to endure more than three decades of lack of co-operation, frustration and lacerating personal abuse at the hands of the great and the good.

"He's a kind of marty." a friend had told me beforehand. "He had a vision and he's been broken by it." But the figure who greeted me in the foyer of the new building seemed not to match such a description. He

wore a black corduroy suit with a vivid blue shirt and no tie. For a 75-year-old he seemed enormously sprightly and his speech pathand excitedly around the entrance hall with its floor of soft-coloured Purbeck stone, its columns of pitted travertine marble and its soaring white walls and curving ceiling. His critics, whose knowledge of the place is generally limited to its unprepossessing exterior, are, one suspects, in for a surprise.

"As an exercise in preconception and prejudice, there just isn't a parallel." said this Emeritus Professor of Architecture at Cambridge University, who was appointed to the project in 1962. He then immediately found some. Christopher Wren took as long to build St Paul's and was out on half-pay for 10 years and fired before the end. When the Houses of Parliament were built, Disraeli said that the architect should be hung in public. And the architect of the Sydney Opera House, Bjorn Utzon, still won't talk to the press after the savaging he received for his design.

"It's put me out of business," he says, simply. Since Prince Charles's remarks in 1988, he doesn't even get on the shortlists. let alone win commissions. "Being the architect of the Great British Disaster I have no work and my practice, the actual partnership, has now dissolved. The team of really fine architects - many of whom gave 12 or 15 years to the project - have dispersed." One of them was his wife Mary Jane Long. "She accepts no self-pity at all. If I whinge I'm told to belt up. When it became clear that we weren't going to get any more work she set up her own business and is doing well. I might now do some work with her. At 75 I haven't done so well that I can afford not to work now."

By the marble staircase to the new reading rooms he pauses to look up at the tapestry - the largest woven this century which he commissioned of the painting If Not, Not by R B Kitaj. It is powerful, vivid and disturbing.

"That's the idea," he says. "Books should disturb." But should libraries? The reasons for the vitriol that has been poured upon him are manifold. But not least is the anguish surrounding the demise of the sublimely beautiful old reading room in the British Museum which was until recently the heart of the Library. A coalition of its present bookish users, former readers



### PAUL VALLELY TALKS TO COLIN ST JOHN WILSON

wistful for their romantic student days and traditionalists in love with the room's historic associations with Marx, Freud, Dickens, Wilde, Shaw and other lustrous names, together created a storm of fury which was fierce and unabated.

"It was very demoralising. But then most of my blood is stubborn Scots. My Dad also had a hard time [he was Bishop of Chelmsford and known then as the Bolshie Bishop]. He did a lot of hanging in there opposing the government over the Spanish Civil War, making a speech in the House of Lords on the atom bomb, which was received in deadly silence. So I carried on.' The unhappy thing is that it is not just his father who is not there to see his achievement. "Sadly all my family are dead," he says slowly, as if surprising himself with the thought, "and so are many of the friends I would have wanted to show it to."

The saga began in 1962 when it was decided to extend the British Museum's library in the heart of Bloomsbury. Wilson was then a lecturer in the school of architecture at Cambridge, and in private practice with the department's professor, Sir Leslie Martin. In 1964, the two were commissioned for the project, which one civil servant told them with masterful understatement "may take quite a time to build". Wilson, who had to his credit a number of university buildings, turned down the job as head of the architecture department at Yale to do the library.

Today he does not regret the decision,

my mind the most. The m transcendent of buildings, a library comes uext; it is in its way also a sacred building." But the first two schemes, on the museum's Bloomsbury site, came to naught. Then, in 1972, the Museum Library and the national Science Library were merged, by an act of parliament, to form the British Library. A bigger site was needed and one was found on the railway goods yard on the Euston Road to the west side of St Pancras Station

where Wilson's library now stands. When Shirley Williams approved the scheme for the last Labour government in 1978, the plan was a three-stage project. But a year later the Thatcher government began what was to prove a tortured process of cuts and changes. The first phase was subdivided into three phases. There then followed at least five major shifts in the planning. "It was stop-go for years. It was simply appalling. We never knew with each bit of funding whether we'd get the money for the next bit, and so it went on." During the waiting he kept busy working on the details, making more than 2,000 separate drawings and sketches for different

parts of the library. "We tried to be pro-active and keep working on how we would approach the next stage if it were approved. I had to keep staff on the payroll - you can't just chuck them out and then get them back in six months' time. It was so wasteful. We had to build things - like a secure reception area and a tunnel to deliver priceless manuscripts which were going to be knocked down. It was a waste of more than £1m. The government was pretending to be realistic but pulling up the plant every 18 months to inspect its roots and see how it's doing is the most expensive way to build."

Eventually the project drew the attention of the National Audit Office, the nation's spending watchdog. It launched an investigation which catalogued 230,000 construction defects. The Tory government had failed to provide adequate management of the 150 sub-contractors. For ideological reasons ministers insisted that the project should follow a "construction management" costing policy - instead of fixing the price at the outset, the government insisted on agreeing payments to contractors as it lurid, and not always accurate, reports about 200 miles of moving bookshelves which juddered, 5,000 sprinkler heads which were found to be rusty, and 2,000 miles of electrical wiring which had to be ripped up and replaced.

None of this was the architect's fault but he seemed to bear the public opprobrium. "One hard moment was switching on the car radio and hearing the tail-end of an interview with David Mellor, who was saying, 'The only thing wrong with the British Library is the architect.' It was libellous and completely cynical on his part; but he knew I wouldn't sue. Then there was William Waldegrave who began talking, when a lot of it was already built, of turning the place into a book store with a tunnel to the British Museum. That was the worst moment of all because going off at half-cock would have been worse than not doing it at all. It would have been deeply humiliating."

But Wilson enters on to all this reluctantly. He is most anxious now to let his building speak for itself. And so it does. The blank-walled exterior may look like an overscaled version of a toy-town Tesco but it belies the grandeur of an interior which feels imposing without being intimidating.

The entrance hall is welcoming and selfexplanatory. "You shouldn't have to ask your way in a public building." Up the broad stairway behind the reception desk is a central mezzanine which is simple to understand, to the left is the main Humanities Reading Room, to the right is the Science wing, at the back is the restaurant.

We mount the stairs, whose bannister rail is wound with a soft leather which entices the hand upwards. "I wanted to treat each reader with respect," he says, in the hope that each individual will savour the feel as he does. The doors are of American oak with handles of dark African teak. The rich smell of leather and wood mingles. "We sense spaces like bats. We hear them too. And smell them."

At the top of the stairway, the King's Library, a massive six-floor tower of black glass, shoots up from the basement to the high ceiling like a massive sculpture. "I work from inside out, and ask what is the task the feature has to perform. Then you dis-

though it was to bring him 30 years of grief. went along. The idea was to bring greater cover the inherent poetry." The free-"I've always really wanted to commit my- control and flexibility; the reality was a standing glass stack will display at its edge self to something really big. Next to a cathe-chaotic nightmare of sub-standard work. the 60,000 leather-clad, gold-tooled volumes of the royal bequest that the books should be on show to the public and kept 'entire and separate'. It is the source of a clever trompe l'oeil - the highly polished black marble surrounding the glass shelving gives the illusion that its sides plunge down into the bowels of the building where four separate levels contain 200 miles of shelves, all kept at a steady 17C and 50 per cent humidity.

We enter the main reading room. The curving line of its high ceiling is broken by levels of terraces which create the impression of hanging gardens. The result combines loftiness with intimacy. Where the old reading room provided a single environment, the varying heights of the new one create spaces in which readers of different temperaments can find a haven

"The day it opens I will watch like a stoat from up there," Wilson says, pointing to the upper terrace, "to see how people choose the seats that will for many of them become a lifetime habit." Each leather-topped desk has a lamp, a plug for a laptop computer, a modem socket and a light to indicate that the reader's books have arrived along the conveyor belts of rolling wheels, which, on a daily basis, can deliver 25,000 books in minutes.

"I wish I'd brought my camera," Wilson says with sudden ferocity. He has been talking of how the room's lights increase in power as the daylight fades when a shaft of sunlight on the ceiling catches his eye. "Look at that light and the abstract patterns it is making." It's a flash of his vast enthusiasm; the key to the determination, patience and faith that have driven him.

"What keeps me going? A sense of history and a sense of purpose, which is partly classical, partly religious. I believe with the Greeks that it is in the nature of everything to fulfil itself. And I do believe with William Blake that everything that lives is holy and has a purpose. We are here to contribute, which doesn't mean you mustn't expect a fight."

Some fight. Wilson once described it as his Thirty Years War. Is it now won? "I will wait to hear from the readers. Then I'll

Deborah Ross is on holiday



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Why it pays to be polite especially to gullible neighbours

There must be a lesson to be learned from the 10-foot-high brick wall on to which we now stare from our kitchen. The architects of this wall, our neighbours, despite being 10 years our juniors are the most grownup people we have ever met they invited us round for a drink once and religiously took the bottle back to the kitchen every time they refilled our glasses not, I think, because they didn't trust us but out of some quaint notion of etiquette. With such impeccable manners, they naturally consulted us every step of the way on their plans to couvert their house in to a palace,

and because they were so po-

lite, it would have seemed churlish not to agree to replacing our view of trees with an enormous brick wall. This has meant entertaining their builders who have been constructing the wall just outside our French windows; it is a bizarre experience to sit eating your comflakes in front of an audience who look away every time you look up. We began to feel like an exhibit from the Turner shortlist.

The lesson to be learned from the brick wall, by the way, is that it obviously pays to be polite. But I've noticed bus conductors don't see it that way. I've re- know, he never went upstairs

cently discovered public transport. Usually I travel on those little buses where the driver doubles as conductor, which have resulted in an epidemic of public politeness. Maybe it's the physical proximity of the driver, or simply recognition of his dual workload, but nine out of 10 passengers now say thank you when they disembark. No doubt as a reflection of their threatened status, the rudeness of the few remaining conductors seems to have increased . "Is there any room upstairs?" asked a German tourist on the number 10 bus. The conductor surlily replied that he didn't

because it gave him nose bleeds. It soon became clear that the man was a complete xenophobe. At Marble Arch an ancient American man got on - I think he was playing up to stereotype: "Oxford Street, Is this where the university is?" but that was no excuse for the staggering rudeness of the conductor who told him to sit down "and stop breathing on me". I had intended to fill the slot in my social conscience left vacant by not having to boycott South African oranges with worrying about the job security of bus conductors. But if they're all like him, the sooner they're extinct

The highlight of my week was. interviewing childcare guru, Penelope Leach. Through her books she was a kind of surrogate mother to me so it was hard to restrain myself from kissing her feet, but I was determined not to do as other journalists had done that week. using the opportunity for free advice on their own children's sleeping problems. Nevertheless, as I did feel she had left me high and dry when the children reached the age of five (cut-off point for childcare manuals), I felt I might at least share with her some of my pride in the achievements of my first Leach baby, now 13. Just

the day before I had sniffed his shirt and detected, for the first time, the whiff of a manly armpit. Now personally I think it's gross when American mothers celebrate their daughters' first period by throwing a menstrual shower or whatever it is they do, but I was surprised to find myself feeling pleased at this olfactory milestone When they're little you boast to everyone about their first smiles and words - I don't see why you're not allowed to feel the same pride in their adolescent development. I would tell you more, but he won't let me in the bathroom for some

## In for a penny, in for a euro. But who will lead the fight?



EDITOR: ANDREW MARK DEPUTY EDITOR: COLIN HUGHES. ADDRESS: I CANADA SQUARE. CANARY WHARE **LONDON E14 5DL** TELEPHONE: 0171 293 2000 OR 0171 345 2000 FAX: 0171 293 2435 OR 0171-345 2435

The aftershocks of a great event are only just beginning to reverberate through our national life. A week ago, Gordon Brown announced that the Government was working towards the replacement of the pound. The sudden reopening of geological rift running through the Conservative party is only one of the effects of this clear public statement. Equally significant, although less remarked upon, was the German Chancellor's declaration that he would bend the rules to keep a seat for Britain at the top table drawing up the plans for the single currency. Important, too, was the confirmation that the main organised economic interests, the TUC, CBI and Chambers of Commerce, are committed to, and preparing for, abolishing the pound in five to seven years' time.

When Mr Brown's words on monetary union fully sink in, they will change our national psychology. This is it. We are going in. All right, we do not know when exactly. We do not even have a target date. But we know we are set on a course. Helmut Kohl would not have put his coat on a seat for Britain if Tony Blair had not made it quite clear that he intended to sit there, and soon.

Barring an unforeseen change in economic circumstances, in the Chancellor's phrase, the next election will be fought as a dress rehearsal for a referendum on the single currency soon afterwards. At some point, all the great and good who believe in the single currency will have to come together to campaign for a Yes vote. We do not know when that will be, although the Government intends it to be "early in the next parliament", which could coincide with the issue of euro notes and coin in January 2002. (Until then, the so-called "single currency" will only mean the irrevocable fixing of exchange rates.) But the Prime Minister and Chancellor effectively launched the Yes campaign last week. Most of the eminent opinion formers who would be on the Yes committee have identified themselves publicly in the past seven days, including most of the big hitters in the Pro-European Party-Within-The-Conservative-Party. Paddy Ashdown even talked of "a grand coalition" to work for the euro.

This is certainly politics on a larger scale than we are used to. Boris Johnson, Euro-sceptic commentator, yesterday mused about the Tory party becoming "an ox-bow lake left by the flow of history". Equally, however, Mr. Blair is taking a big risk in associating Labour with the interests of big business against the little-guy nationalism of William Hague's Tories. All the emotional arguments are on the side of the Poujadists: the thousand years of history, sovereignty and the sovereign's head, decimalisation, price rises being sneaked past little old ladies who can't do the conversions in their head, fears of unemployment, and who-won-the-war-any-

way anti-German sentiment. Sure, the argument will look a little dif-

ferent when euro mortgages are two per-centage points cheaper than sterling ones, when Marks and Spencers start taking euro notes and multinationals price everything internally in euros. But Mr Blair cannot rely on it being a replay of 1975, when an initially hostile public was swayed by the soothing assurances of the Establishment.

So the Prime Minister demotion restrained praise for taking a stand against the drift of public opinion for once, although it has to be said that this is a form of leadership that would not be recognised by his alleged role model, Margaret Thatcher. He is the most cautious of risktakers, always with an eye to the escape route. It was not the Prime Minister but the Chancellor who made the Commons statement last Monday. It was not the Prime Minister but the grandees of industry and the Tory party who stood up to plead the case for the euro last week.

This is leadership by nudging the crowd in the right direction and putting

oneself in the middle of it. It is good polities, but it is hardly Brave New Politics. Through his Chancellor, Mr Blair has now disowned the coarse nationalist stogans all about St George and the slaying of dragons - he penned for the Sun during the election campaign. That turns out to have been a cynical pitch for the votes of Middle Little England; the real Mr Blair tipped us the wink the weekend before polling day, saying: "If we win this election, we will have done so without ceding any ground that cannot be recovered."

It is not pretty, it is not open, and it is not altogether honest; but it has confounded the Euro-sceptics, including those in Mr Blair's own party, and it has kept the right-wing press wolves at bay. However, the single currency referendum is going to have to be fought and won, and it won't be won from behind. One day, Mr Blair will have to emerge from the crowd and lead. The sooner that day comes, the better.

Post letters to Letters to the Editor and include a daytime telephone number Fax 0171 293 2056; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk E-mail correspondents are asked to give a postal address. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

### **LETTERS**

#### Woodward trial

Sir: It is entirely natural that Ann Treneman should want to defend her country and its legal system ("Britain's xenophobic response hides the real issue - a clash of cultures", 1 November) but in doing so she displays the same xenophobia she claims to detect in

In my experience, disquiet at the Louise Woodward verdict is caused not by anti-American prejudice but by examination of evidence which quite clearly failed to establish guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

Of course cultural differences cause misunderstandings but surely it is no more xenophobic to question the verdict of an American court than it is treacherous to question the verdict of a British one. KEVIN DAY London SW16

Sir: Ann Treneman raises an interesting point about the way British xenophobia surfaces when one of "our" girls is convicted in a foreign country. But in the Louise Woodward case it seems to me that xenophobia may, equally, have worked the other way.

If the Brits see themselves in relation to the US as two countries divided by a common language, it goes the other wav too. Isn't it possible that an American jury felt the same kind of bias towards its own that Ms Treneman accuses us of feeling on behalf of Louise? ANGELA NEUSTATTER London N5

Sir: Here in America, press coverage of the Louise Woodward trial has focused on the reaction of the British people toward the verdict and sentencing in Massachusetts. The sentiment in the UK seems to be that the trial was a spectacle and that Woodward was utterly incapable of killing the baby boy.

But most Americans accept that even fair trials can result in the wrong verdict, and that anyone, regardless of race or class, can be guilty of murder. While we sympathise with the Woodward family, we know that the system by which Louise was tried was fair, if not perfect in its results.

Americans especially ap-

preciate having cameras in the courtroom, where we can keep experimental research. an eye on the process to ensure objectivity and fairness.

What we do not want is for our system to emulate yours, where only five per cent of trials are by jury, where the state wields enormous power over the individual through the police and prosecutors, and where there is little or no oversight of the machinations of judicial

PETER FREEMAN Washington DC

Sir: A jury is only a committee and, like any such body, is likely to lean in the direction of those who happen to be its most dominant and vocal members. How many members of how many juries have not stifled reasonable doubts out of a combination of deference and

Acceptance of the reliability of jury verdicts is an act of



faith; it ought to be founded on PISTEWART

Sir: If Louise Woodward was not responsible for the death of Matthew Eappen, who was? Experts should be looking seriously at the behavioural problems of Matthew's brother Brendan for possible solutions. The British nanny Catherine

Blood says she turned down a job with the Eappen family because she thought Brendan could do damage to himself because of his hyperactivity and aggressive manner (report, 1 November). Just what damage could an over-boisterous two-year-old do to a baby? MARTYN LUMLEY Wallasey, Merseyside

Sir: I wonder if the jury in the Louise Woodward trial were affected by the fact that Barry Scheck, her senior defence lawyer, was the man who "got off" O J Simpson? That trial has been seen as a miscarriage of justice and it is possible that the jury felt that Mr Scheck was too clever a lawyer to be trusted. ROSALIND LUND

Sir: Why do Professor John A Davis and Arielle Lister (Letters, 1 November) presume that a mother should be the parent to remain at home? What about fathers giving up work to look after their children? KATHLEEN ROBB Chelmsford, Essex

Business and EMU

Sir: I would like to question the assumption that "business" is unequivocally in favour of Emu "Heseltine calls on Tories to fight Hague's Euro-phobia", 31 October).

rectors conducted a vote after

When the Institute of Di-

a debate on Emu at our 1996 Annual Convention, nearly 30 per cent of attendees were in favour of Emu; nearly 70 per cent were against, with a small margin of don't knows. These figures were broadly replicated by a subsequent opinion survey of our members. And earlier this month. I was speaking at a conference of small businessmen and a "hands-up" poll indicated a majority against the single currency, a sizeable minority of don't knows and a handful in favour. There was also a distinct feeling that the large companies were bullying

the small. It is clear that there are some advantages of Emu membership for some sectors of British business. This is especially true for large multinationals which operate on an EU-wide basis and companies which export heavily to the rest of the EU and have been hit recently by the very strong pound against the Deutschmark, But for the very large majority of companies which are not in these very vocal categories, the advantages of Emu membership are altogether more elusive. Many of them remember all too clearly the disastrous experience of ERM membership when the UK was unable to trim its interest rates to domestic needs. And they clearly say no to Emu for the foreseeable future. RUTH LEA

Head of the Policy Unit Institute of Directors London SWI

Dignified death

Sir. Reporting of the Annie Lindsell case (29 October) may have led to the misconception that she had won a right not previously available to her. In fact the court did not rule on the lawfulness of her GP setting up a syringe driver

containing diamorphine in doses appropriate to relieve her emotional and physical distress, because no such declaration was required.

Case law in this country has long established that drugs required to alleviate physical distress at the end of life can be lawfully administered even at the risk of some shortening of life. The first case to make this explicit was that of Bodkins-Adams as far back as 1957.

The case has achieved nothing and should not have come to court. The ethical and legal issues are complex but the euthanasia debate cannot be truly informed unless we appreciate that such humane and dignified deaths as that envisaged are already fully available to us under the existing terms of the law.

Dr KILIAN DUNPHY Macmillan Consultant in Palliative Carc St Albans, Hertfordshire

#### The end of duty-free

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Sir: I am concerned that a decision on the abolition of dutyfree shopping within the EU has been made without fully debating the effects, not only on those of us who work in dutyfree and who risk losing our jobs within the next 18 months, but also on those who travel within the EU ("Duty-free plan goes ahead", 31 October). ....

Duty-free sales at the airport subsidise the landing fees paid by airlines and in-flight dutyfree sales or sales on board ferries also subsidise the cost of travel. From July 1999 not only will travellers be unable to buy the duty-fre products they see as a welcome perk, but they will inevitably be paying more to travel.

It is not on'y those people who work in duty-free whose jobs are at risk. Other industries, notably the Scottish whisky industry, rely heavily on the duty-free sector for sales and will also face jcb losses if the proposed abolition goes through. LYNNE PRESCOTT

Chandler's Ford, Hampshire

#### News audiences

Sir: Your report (27 October) is wide of the mark in claiming that the BBC North West's regional news programme Nonhwest Tonight is in "the only region in the whole of Britain where the BBC out-rates its ITV rival".

Last month, BBC regional news programmes outperformed their ITV competitors in five out of the 10 English regions in terms of audience share, and overall the BBC share of the available audience for early evening news in September was 38 per cent compared with ITV's 33 per cent share. NIGEL CHAPMAN Controller

BBC English Regions Birmingham

E-mail vs snail mail

Sir: Peter Wynn Davis (Letters, 1 November), thinks a privatised Post Office can compete against e-mail. This e-mail letter took about five minutes to reach its destination, at a cost of about 1p in telephone charges. Enough said. STEPHEN JONES Barcelona (via e-mail)

### Growing up but remaining true to Auntie: the next 75 years of the BBC dinner jacket, Lord Birt ex-



KINGTON

that the BBC is celebrating its first 75 years - indeed, you must be sick to death of hearing how Lord Reith invented the dinner jacket, how ITMA won the war and how the BBC made almost all the best TV programmes in the world and then proceeded to wipe them - so here is something quite different. A history of the next 75 years of the BBC.

Yes, ladies and gentlemen we proudly present "The History of the BBC From Now to AD 2072". So here we go bravely into the future...

Sir Christopher Bland announces that the digital revoiution is almost upon us. John Birt announces that his

Broadcasting House fills up with managers, while programme makers are relegated to outer London.

The digital revolution is here! Sir John Birt inaugurates a 24hour rolling news service. The first news item is a report that Sir John Birt has inaugurated the 24-hour rolling news service. "We are entering a new

era," says Sir John Birt. Millions switch off. Outer London overflows with junior managers, while programmemakers are henceforth restricted to provincial towns, or "centres of excellence".

Sir Christopher Bland announ-

knighthood is nearly upon him. ces that the digital era is coming to an end. In the next period of excellence, all politicians and trouble spots will be fitted with secret touch pad sound/vision sources which can be

switched on from London. This means that camera and sound people will no longer be needed to broadcast news, which will henceforth broadcast itself, as all newsworthy people and places are now wired for sound and vision.

Sir John Birt reveals that this will mean the creation of a second, parallel, non-stop rolling news channel.

An order goes out from the Director-General that all manwhen writing motivational memos to staff, and all corporation accountants must wear dinner jackets at all times.

Programme-makers are relegated to offshore rocks and mountainous regions, known as "islands of excellence".

There are now five BBC parallel rolling news services, 24hours-a-day. "In this post-digital age it is imperative to have a choice of non-stop news services," says Lord Birt. "Only with multiple news services can you get balance."

To mark the tenth anniversary of Diana Princess of Wales's

agers must wear dinner jackets death, all BBC channels go over to rerunning broadcasts of the week in 1997 when the BBC went collectively mad, got raging Dianamania and turned into Hello! magazine.

> A top secret report reveals to Lord Birt that no new programmes have been made since AD2003 and stresses that something must be done.

Lord Birt announces a series of major new comedy programmes, including The 24 Hours News Quiz, Have I Got Rolling News For You etc., etc.

Lord Birt announces plans for the new Anto-Access revolu-

tion. Wearing an Armani white

to a programme at a time other than when it is actually being broadcast. "Until now." he says, "we have been fatally limited to tuning into only those programmes which are actually going out at the time. But what if we can tune into any programme going out at any time? Especially in the past? I am proud to say that new technology now allows us to tap into the past as the past

plains that the new Auto-Ac-

cess technology enables

viewers and listeners to tune in

His critics say that this is just another name for churning out repeats, but Lord Birt deals with this criticism in the way he always has; he ignores it.

A recurrent rumour has it that Lord Birt not only has no intention of retiring but that new technology will allow him to stop ageing when he reaches the age of 70 in AD2014. Substance is lent to this story when he says:

The most important thing in any organisation is continuity, and continuity can only be achieved by maintaining the excellence of leadership.

His critics say this means that he will never resign. His critics mysteriously die.

The rest of this 75 year future history of the BBC can be found on Website BBC75.doomsday/Birt/ obit/dotcodot.

## 15/COMMENT

## Junior school to coal face, we can make a difference



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COOPER

Yvette Cooper, a former economics writer on The Independent, has just passed her first half year as an MP. She always knew that parliamentary politics would be a weird way to make a living. But does she still feel the battle to be elected was worth the trouble?

When a former colleague from The Independent asked me, "So what do you MPs do then?" I found myself spluttering and pulling anxious faces. The truth is, six months after being elected as the Labour MP for Pontefract and Castleford in West Yorkshire, I still don't really know how to answer that question.

I know I work long hours, and that there's never time to fit in all the things I want to do, never mind all the things I fear I ought to do. But I couldn't give you a job description for the life of me. Nor is there such a thing as a typical day for me to describe in order to explain or justify my existence.

For example, last week I ate turkey drumsticks and lemon sponge in a junior school hall and talked about the Spice Girls to seven-year-olds and reading standards to their headteacher. Just half an hour later I was touring the shop floor at the local After Eights factory, mob cap on my head, meeting staff and persuading the manager to take on several teenagers under the Government's welfare-to-work programme.

One minute I'm sitting in the corner of a library listening to a recently bereaved old man mumble about children playing football against his back wall. The next i am quaking in a Newsnight studio as Kirsty Wark asks me about the Government's statement on a single currency. Of a morning I could be at the coal face with miners at Kellingley pit. Three hours and a fast train from Doncaster later. I could be sat in a green leather armchair in a plush House of Commons tea room, being briefed by the Treasury whip on the intricacies of the Finance Bill legislation.

But what do I do? What do I achieve? On Monday, in a cool four minutes, I got one Pontefract man's Child Support Agency contributions reduced by £100 a month. All it took was one phone call from the MP and the CSA official admitted to the error that the poor father and my assistant had been struggling to draw their attention to for weeks. Sadly the hours spent on the hundreds of other constituents' cases - CSA, housing, nuisance neighbours, cycle routes

- rarely yield such rapid results. Curiously even when I do get a hit, I feel guilty rather than elated. After all, what if I hadn't made that four-minute phone call. and what about all the countless other cases there isn't time to follow through with such personal attention? In my nightmares I am walking down a long street lined with good causes, but I only have a pound to give

and I don't know where or when to stop. But the real power MPs have for progressive change goes beyond individual cases. It lies in our licence to interfere. Now that we have a Labour government I find everyone wants to meet their Labour MP - employers, administrators, teachers, doctors, the list is endless - to talk to me, to take seriously my comments and suggestions. And of course we have access to ministers at the national level, too. The opportunity that creates to make connections, build bridges and alliances, in order

to get sensible things done is considerable. Take the New Deal for the young and long-term unemployed. Under the direction of government, local partnerships are being formed between the Employment Service, local authorities, chambers of commerce, training organisations, colleges and others to work out how to implement the detail.

I remember well the baffled incomprehension on local officials' faces when Wakefield district MPs invited themselves along to the meeting, too. One grey-suited man stared in alarm at his neighbour, "What's it got to do with them? Who is this bossy woman?" written all over his face. He spent the rest of the meeting in stunned silence as we chivvied and agitated, enthused and suggested, and made very clear that we intended to be heavily involved.

Other MPs are doing the same. The big challenge, to make the New Deal work, is to sign up local employers - something MPs are often better placed to do than local administrators. Many of my colleagues have held breakfast meetings with local businesses to persuade them to take on a teenager or two, and every few weeks we gather in Westminster to compare notes and collect grumbles or titbits to feed back to the minister responsible.

Because the fact is, making the New Deal work in practice has an awful lot to do with us. We fought for this, and we swore we would deliver it. For my entire adult life persistent unemployment was one of those lamentable problems we anguished about. I'm even more sensitive about the problem now, representing towns which suffer badly from long-term unemployment. Pacing the pavements with balloons and stickers during the election campaign, this was the one issue. more than any other, on which I promised local voters that Labour would make a dif-

Now suddenly we have a chance to do something really bold to change the lives of those who are suffering most. The cash is there, the structures are there, all we need is a bit of local imagination and enthusiasm to make it work, and ensure we get people into real jobs, not just pointless schemes. This is traditional Labour territory: jobs jobs, jobs, underpinned by education, education, education. That is why I chivvy, badger, and interfere. That is why so many MPs are stomping the streets to leave no business unturned. We believe that our partic-

ipation will improve the chances of success. Seven months ago, I was still a journalist, delighting in the healthy scepticism and intelligent individualism that makes broadsheet newspapers so essential to a thriving democracy.

In contrast, I fear now that former journalist colleagues will find me earnest, idealistic and breathless. So be it. We have a unique opportunity. Whatever the ordinary frustrations, constraints and troubles of modern politics, those of us lucky enough to be on the Government's back benches are in an unusual and exciting position. If we can't seize the moment now, we shouldn't be doing the job.



Dr Nitschke and his killing machine: 'I find myself in a position all the time of breaking the law. I don't like it at all' Photograph: Glynn Griffiths

He invented the machine report on a situation where lo-

cal doctors were loath to give

earlier this year, Dr Nitschke

## Dr Death asks some painful questions

because patients said they want-

In Australia and the United States, euthanasia has replaced abortion as the big moral question of our time. There is an urgent need for proper debate, says Dr Philip Nitschke, who has helped several terminally ill people to die. He speaks to Ann Treneman

Dr Philip Nitschke is the only doctor in the world who has legally helped patients kill themselves. He helped four people to die - though some would call it murder - during the eight months in which euthanasia was legal in the Northern Territory. He says that he couldn't help but feel a bit like an executioner when he turned up on the doorstep at the appointed hour, killing machine in hand. But now that euthanasia is illegal again, he feels like a criminal as he tries to help the people who constantly ask for his help.

Executioner or criminal?

Legal or back-street euthanasia? Right or wrong? It's the kind of thing that we should be debating here because - like it or not - euthanasia is a subject whose time has come. In the US and Australia it is seen as the great moral question of our time and a subject that has replaced abortion in terms of ethical talking points. Tomorrow in the far western American state of Oregon voters will decide whether it should be legal. Three Australian states are considering some sort of legislation. In Holland, where it is decriminalised but still illegal, the debate is murkier but ongoing.

In Britain, however, there is little informed discussion. Last

week the High Court ruled that Annie Lindsell, a 46-year-old woman who is gravely ill with the debilitating but not usually painful motor neurone disease, could receive an injection from her doctor to make her unconscious in order to relieve her mental suffering. But do most of us really know what this means? A few days later the International Forum for Transplant Ethics headed by the former president of the Royal College came out in favour of giving lethal injections to patients who are in permanent vegetative states and then harvesting their organs. But do we have any idea what we are really talking about here?

Dr Philip Nitschke does and the story of his eight months as a practising euthanasia doctor has more than a few surprises. Part of this is because the man they call Dr Death is himself a surprise. Today he is on his way to Oregon for the vote and last week he was in London to address a Voluntary Euthanasia Society symposium. I met him and his killing machine at his London hotel room.

"Oh I've had so many probiems with that bloody machine," he says as we walk towards the room. These turn out to be technical in nature and he says it's a good thing it doesn't have to be used again. In the room the laptop computer attached to a contraption of vials and a needle is all set up. The barbiturates are even loaded, as is the "Deliverance" software that enabled his terminally ill patients to tap their way through a series of steps, the last of which triggered a lethal injection. The machine still has its Qantas luggage tags attached. It is not considered hand luggage.

ed to be in control of their own deaths. By law, he only had to be in the room when they hit the button. He no longer uses it though he does admit to helping some people who would have qualified under the old law to try and get the barbiturates they want so desperately. "I find myself in the position all the time of breaking the law. I don't like it at all. One has to be constantly careful. One has to sneak around. One feels like a criminal. But if they are going to push us back into that shadowy illegal world, you will get behaviour that is more in keeping with the jungle than when we had a piece of legislation and a bit of sunlight on the

Dr Nitschke was contacted by some 50 people who wanted to die and, as such, managed to build the first profile of its kind. "They were almost all terminally ill from cancer and were in the late stages after everything else had been tried. They were older, mid-sixties, and usually from the lower economic spectrum. You know, people who have money have never had trouble getting access to euthanasia. The people who contacted me were not part of the club, they did not have brothers and sisters who were doctors. One of the good things about the Territory law was that it opened things up to everyone. It was not just a matter of who you knew. It became something that people saw as

one of their rights." The law caused uproar when it came into effect on 1 July 1996. Media from all over the world made their way to the remote Northern Territory to

and treated as such. that the patient asks for the in- all our lives - and deaths.

the signatures that were required under the law. The first two people to die did so in the middle of a media scrum. Whatever it was, this was not death with dignity. "At first the law was a circus but then the situation changed. The media interest died off. It wasn't seen as a sideshow anymore. They were discreet and private affairs." When the federal government overturned the law by a two-vote margin

had patients who were ready to die. One was Esther Wild and her story, he believes, shows the hypocrisy of the law as it now stands around the world. Because neither he nor his machine could give her a lethal injection. Dr Nitschke could only treat Esther Wild for her pain. This is what is called the "double effect" when treatment for pain ends up hastening death. It is not illegal as long as the doctor only intends to treat the pain. This is common practice around Britain and was the crux of Annie Lindsell's case. In effect, Annie Lindsell won a

Dr Nitschke sees this as "slow euthanasia". The idea is

widening of how the current law

is interpreted and for her men-

tal suffering to be seen as pain

fusion to begin and they then slip into a coma and eventualdie. In practice, of course, there can be problems. "In Esther Wild's case we started the infusion but three times in four days she woke up. One time she woke up and asked 'Am I dead? Is this death?' and I had to run in and get the infusion running again." Opponents of euthanasia praised the case as good medical practice, which Dr Nitschke finds bizarre. "To call that obseenity good medical practice just shows how far off the rails we are."

A key lesson here is that there is a demand for euthanasia and demands tend to get met, one way or the other. There is a lot of interest now in developing a "suicide pill" that would be a human version of the one used by veterinarians for animals. "This is not the way I want to see it go but in the some way as I see it as an inevitable consequence of having so much difficulty getting legislation passed," he says. "We battle, battle, battle, battle and can't get the law through. It's not surprising that people are putting effort into this kind of thing."

The idea of a suicide pill, like euthanasia, is not the kind of thing we want to think about. But think we must for this is one of the great questions of our time and how we answer affects

## One woman shows southerners they have new friends in the north

The south's ringing endorsement of its first northern president reflects the changing state of Irish nationalism and some new hope for the peace process, says David McKittrick.

> Although the president of the Irish Republic is supposed to have few powers beyond the strictly ceremonial, the election of Mary McAleese contains great significance for northsouth and Anglo-Irish relations. It comes as representatives

of the British and Irish governments and most of Northern Ireland's political parties are ensconced in Stormont working on a new dispensation which could be as far-reaching as the 1920s arrangement which created Northern Ireland.

The south's choice of Professor McAleese, by the biggest winning margin in the Republic's history, says much about what it wants to see emerging from the Stormont talks. The extraordinary campaign gave telling insights into southern opinion, and in particular the

state of Irish nationalism. She is the first British citizen to be elected president of the Republic. Her predecessor. Mary Robinson, has gone down

in history as the first woman to hold the post: Professor McAleese will go down as the first northerner. This is in itself hugely significant, since being from the north has traditionally been a drawback in southern politics. Even before the troubles many in the south found many northerners rather too blunt, too hard, too harsh for comfort. Decades of violence and political deadlock sharpened that original distaste into real aversion. Yet the belief is now wide-

spread in the south that the troubles are almost certainly over, and this rapidly growing feeling seems to have brought with it a new fellow-feeling for northern nationalists. The presidential campaign provided firm evidence of this.

The dominant issue in the campaign was that of the nature of Mary McAlcese's nationalism, which assumed centrestage when leaked documents were produced which were used to allege that she was secretly sympathetic to Sinn Fein. Up to that point the campaign, with its five well-mannered candidates, had been gracious and genteel;

the leaks issue ignited it. Someone had gone through sensitive Irish foreign ministry documents, copied anything which looked damaging to Professor McAleese, and posted



President Mary McAleese

them to newspapers. When questioned about them, she explained that she had been part of a behind-the-scenes peace initiative under the auspices of the Redemptorist Order. Redemptorist priest Father Alex Reid, who helped bring about the first IRA cessation of violence, was trying to bring about a second ceasefire and she was helping him.

Around this time she also received what looked like the endorsement from hell, when Gerry Adams announced that if he had a vote he would cast if for her. John Bruton, leader of the largest opposition party, Fine Gael, seized on this and attacked the Adams endorsement. At that point Professor McAleese was slightly ahead in the polls. Whoever leaked the documents clearly hoped to wreck her campaign, while her

political opponents hoped to tap into what they assumed was a latent vein of anti-northern sentiment. The opinion polls which followed, however, told an astonishing story: both the leaks and the criticisms had backfired and been counterproductive.

She sailed even further ahead in the polls, while the approval rating for John Bruton dropped like a stone from 60 to 43 per cent. After that Professor McAlcese never looked back, as waves of sympathy brought more and more support from those who believed she was victim of dirty tricks.

The psychiatrist Professor Anthony Clare, for example, wrote of "a smear of McCarthyite proportions hatched, fanned and daubed all over the McAleese campaign - the classic smear of guilt by association, used with a gusto reminiscent of J Edgar Hoover at his most

malign". The episode cast light on the overall peace process. There is a strain of opinion in the south, particularly well-represented in the media, which has deep concerns and reservations about the course of the process which has led to the IRA's present ceasefire and Sinn Fein's subsequent entry into talks.

This worry, presented in its

most aggressive form, has been

tempting to bring Sinn Fein into mainstream politics are naive and foolish, or, alternatively, crypto-republicans. They believe Sinn Fein will not be tarned by the political system but will instead pollute it. The McAleese leaks pro-

used to argue that those at-

vided the most acute test of support for this proposition. The result appears to have been an emphatic endorsement of the McAleese approach and the peace process as a whole, as the allegation that she was a "sneaking regarder" of republicanism was briskly rejected.

The election may also have shown that southern voters, in this contest at least, did not show themselves overly concerned with the effect of the result on those other important northerners, the Unionists. This point is, however, highly arguable, since Unionists sent very mixed messages during the

Some contradicted Professor McAleese's assertion that she had the private goodwill and support of many Unionists, though later a number of Protestant clergy spoke publicly of her as both a peacemaker and a committed ecumenist. The clincher, for those southerners worried about Unionist opinion, probably came when John Taylor, deputy leader of the Ulster Unionist party, said that while she was "an out-andout nationalist" she was by no means a republican sympathiser and "a most able person, quite easy to work with".

Nonetheless, the McAleese success will give many Protestants cause to reflect on the steady rise in northern nationalist power and what they view as its unfortunate corollary, the steady decline in Unionist

The new Irish president is a product of Belfast ghetto Catholicism: her family fled the city after their house was shot up by loyalists in the early 1970s. After that unpromising start she has emerged from the trauma of the troubles a remarkably self-confident and assertive person; and there are plenty more where she came from.

Quite a few of them are present inside the Stormont talks, while many more today play a leading part in Northern Ireland's public life. Unionists will be all too aware that these are people who regard themselves as being on the way up. They clearly will not endorse any settlement emerging from Stormont which does not give full recognition to their Irishness, as the south's electorate has just endorsed the Irishness of the first northern president.



rating in a test for the best whitening toothpaste carried out by Now magazine, the smarter woman's weekly.

Now Magazine has this to say about Rembrandt, which came out top of five

Used over six weeks it did make teeth whiter - without feeling abrasive which isn't had considering it had to cope with coffee, tea, red wine and smoking. Guaranteed to bring a sparkle to your smile.

- Now magazine 1997

Rembrandt, the low abrasion whitening toothpaste. A unique formula of enzymes and anti-plaque agents gently break down stains.

The results are simply dazzling. Available from quality chemists everywhere.

REMBRANDT



Princess Olga: beauty and dignity with a stern exterior

Photograph: Hulton Getty

Princess Olga of Greece born Tatoi, Greece II June 1903; married 1923 Prince Paul of Yugoslavia (died 1976; one son, one daughter and one son deceased); died Paris 16 October 1997.

Princess Paul of Yugoslavia, born Princess Olga of Greece, was one of three sisters considered to be the great beauties of their era. Thanks both to her birth, and to her marriage to Prince Paul of Yugoslavia, much of her life was dominated by the impossibly tricky political situation in the Balkans before and during the Second World War.

She was the eldest daughter of Prince Nicholas of Greece and Denmark (son of King George I of Greece) and of the Romanov Princess, the Grand Duchess Helen Vladimirovna of Russia. Born in 1903, she was one of three daughters, the youngest of whom, Marina, was to become the Duchess of Kent. Of the three. Princess Olga was generally acclaimed the most beautiful.

Her early life in Greece was punctuated by periods of exile and relative poverty, as her parents followed the fortunes of the Greek royal family - into exile in 1917, back to Greece in 1921 and then again into exile the following year. She was devoted to both her parents, though her character was shaped more by her powerful and pious imperial Russian mother than by her artistic, relaxed and more liberal father. Indeed, she was naive, almost child-like in her simplicity and devoutness, yet showed a stern and uncompromising exterior.

After a brief engagement to Crown Prince Frederick of Denmark, Princess Olga married, on 22 October 1923, Prince Paul of Yugoslavia, the only son of Prince Arsene of Serbia and Anrore Demidoff, Princess of San Donato. Prince Paul was intelligent, civilised and Anglophile and, for the remaining 53 years of his life, he was to be her gentle and courteous husband.

From 1923 to 1941, Prince Paul and Princess Olga lived quietly in Yugoslavia, making frequent trips abroad to visit relatives and friends - particularly to London where they flourished as part of the Chips Channon set. Though Prince Paul created a Modern Art Gallery in Belgrade and made himself generally available to his cousin, King Alexander, he was given neither government nor official responsibilities. Until 1934, he lived a peaceful but frustrated existence.

Then, in 1934, the year that Princess Olga's sister Marina married the Duke of Kent, King Alexander of Yugoslavia was assassinated in Marseilles. Prince Paul was appointed Regent until King Peter reached his majority in September 1941. This was to change his life and the life of his wife and family

As an Oxford educated lifelong supporter and admirer of Great Britain, whose father-inlaw was the Duke of Kent, whose "best man" at his wedding in 1923 had been the future King George VI, Prince Paul sought, as Regent, to steer a course for his country which was consistent with his own pro-British sympathies internationally and with his instinct

for tolerance and compromise at home.

For seven years Princess Olga could bask in the reflected glory of his successes. Domestically, he kept the disparate religions and races which comprised the recently formed South Slav Kingdom of Yugoslavia and internationally be bad preserved the territorial integrity of his nation. Until January 1941 Prince

Paul was able to count on one important factor; the interests of Yugoslavia never crossed those of Britain. Deprived of military and financial aid from London, his government had had no option but to opt for a policy of neutrality. This was supported by Britain. In 1939 Churchill had pressed Chamberlain to send help to the Balkans: "If these states remain exposed to German and Italian pressure while we appear, as . they may deem it, incapable of action, they will be freed to make the best terms possible with Berlin and Rome."

On 6 January 1941 the British Ambassador Sir Ronald Campbell called on Prince Paul and informed him that Churchill had decided neutrality was no longer enough. Britain needed to create a "side show" in the Balkans. Yugoslavia was to join a united Balkan front and British troops were to land in Greece. This, as Prince Paul knew only too well, would provake Hitler into a Balkan offensive. Britain was calling for an act of Yugoslav suicide and in the end the whole of the Balkans would be

Prince Paul decided to play for time. He refused Hitler's invitation to sign the Tripartite

Pact on 4 March. He returned to Belgrade the next day, resolved to fight. His Council of State, however, voted otherwise.

Within two weeks a Britishinspired coup had toppled him. Twelve days later, Belgrade lay in ruins and Yugoslavia had been overrun. While the Germans advanced on Greece and the commonwealth troops sent there from North Africa were being decimated, Prince Paul, Princess Olga and their children were begioning their years of imprisonment and exile in Kenya.

On 27 August 1942, Prince Paul heard that Princess Marina's busband, and his loyal friend, the young Duke of Kent, had been killed in an aeroplane crash. King George arranged for Princess Olga to fly to London to comfort her sister.

If Princess Olga needed any convincing of how quickly and dramatically the British wartime propaganda could set to work, she saw it first hand that September in London. The press and even the House of Commons seemed filled with hatred for her husband.

When she returned to Kenya, she found he had gone to pieces. Living in the dilapidated home of the recently murdered Lord Errol, Prince Paul had given up hope. She set to work on his diaries and on the house with courage and humility. "If only the house was less depressing - still one must be grateful for a roof and food compared to the misery of others."

In late spring of 1943, at the instigation of General Smuts. Prince and Princess Paul were allowed to move to the Cape and their lives began to improve. Yet the official "treach-

erous quisting" line on her husband continued to hound them. In August 1946 their daughter Elizabeth, aged 10, struck a girl at school for taunting her that "her father had

Blue ch

been friends with Hitler". The moment when emotionally Britain's hand of friendship was once more held out to them came in early 1947 when King George and Queen Elizabeth visited South Africa. Despite official objections, the King and Queen insisted on receiving their old friends. This display of loyalty and affection changed Prince Paul's life.

They eventually returned Europe in 1949 and settled in Paris. Their eldest son Alexander had joined the RAF, their younger son Nicholas had gone up to Oxford and Elizabeth was a boarder in England At last they seemed to have found peace. But fate had one last cruel blow in store for them. In 1954 Nicholas was killed in a car accident. In many ways the family never recovered from this.

For the remainder of their lives, Prince Paul and Princess Olga were welcomed by all their old friends. They were invited to Buckingham Palace and Windsor. Gradually, the truth of what had really happened in 1941 began to trickle out. Prince Paul, to his wife's complete amazement, remained, to the end, a true friend of Britain.

Prince Paul died in Paris in 1976. Princess Olga lived for a further 21 years in their small and elegant corner house near the Trocadero. She retained her beauty and dignity (and her severe exterior) to the end.

### **Gien Buxton**

Glen Buxton, guitarist: born Akron, Ohio 17 june 1947; died Clarion, Iowa 18 October 1997.

Striking, outrageous frontmen often obscure the contribution other musicians make to a par- and their friends convened a ticular band. Indeed, before its seance with an ouija board. To singer branched out as a solo their amazement, it spelt the artist, the American act Alice Cooper was very much a group creation. Glen Buxton was one of the original guitarists with the Seventies shock-rockers and contributed to some of their most enduring and influential hits like the immortal teenage rebel anthem "School's Out", a British No 1 in 1972.

Born in Akron, Ohio in 1947. Buxton was the guitarist in the Sixtles with the Spiders (originally the Earwigs), a Midwest garage band which also featured the singer Vincent Furnier (the preacher's son from Detroit who would later assume the Alice character) and the bassist Dennis Dunaway. They had met at Cortez High School in Arizona while working on the school paper - and taking part in sports events. Having impersonated the Beatles at a talent show, they had moved on to performing Rolling Stones covers around the Phoenix area but, with the arrival of guitarist Michael Bruce from local rivals The Wildflowers, they started to write their own material and even put out a single, "Don't Blow Your Mind", on the local Santa Cruz label.

However, in 1968, rednecks didn't take too kindly to longhaired musicians playing psychedelic rock. So, hoping for a

major record deal, the Spiders relocated to Los Angeles, adding the drummer Neal Smith to the line-up and became the Nazz. Todd Rundgren was already using this name and, in desperation, the band name Alice Cooper. A legend, involving a 16th-century English witch, was born.

In California, the late Sixties were heady days. The members of Alice Cooper hung out with the Doors, Love, David Crosby, and supported Led Zeppelin and Buffalo Springfield. Frank Zappa was setting up his own label, Straight Records, and saw in Alice Cooper kindred soirits to his infamous Mothers Of Invention, who were already attacking the bippie dream from within. He signed up Alice Cooper and, at the end of 1969, released Pretties For You, which reached number 193 in the US album

Furnier, Buxton, Smith and Dunaway were art majors and started to complement their recordings' cinematic feel with theatrical stage effects. The singer would fight with the drummer, then tear up pillows and feathers would fly everywhere. The director Frank Perry used this stunt when the group appeared in the 1970 film Diary Of A Mad Housewife.

Despite being tagged the worst band in Los Angeles, Alice Cooper made some headway, appearing at the Toronto Peace Fesival with John Lennon and Gene Vincent. D.A. Pennebaker filmed them

throwing a chicken in the audience and the ghoulish grapevine of rumours started. Given the group's name, their long hair and flashy stage clothes, some people even thought they were transvestites. But Easy Action, their secbel over. The band moved back to their Midwest stronghold and concocted a new stage set which would reflect the dark

hole in the heart of America. In 1971, under the guidance of the Canadian producer Bob Ezrin, Alice Cooper stepped up a couple of gears and recorded Love It To Death, featuring their first hit single, "Eighteen", as well as "The Ballad Of Dwight Fry" which became one of the high-points of their live set, complete with the singer tied up in a straitjacket and tortured by a nurse. They also used an electric chair but, for the Killer album and tour six months later, graduated to gallows, a boa constrictor and plastic babies. America was truly shocked but teenagers loved it, flocking to the concerts

as if to a horror film. School's Out, released in the summer of 1972, saw the group become a worldwide phenomenon. The album, packaged in a mock-up of a schooldesk with a pair of disposable paper panties inside, had parents gasping, but the rousing title track remains one of rock's finest moments. Glen Buxton came up with the opening guitar riff, though originally only fellow guitarist Michael Bruce and Vincent Furnier

later ruling split the credit between all five members).

According to Bruce (who wrote the excellent and revealing book No More Mr Nice Guy: the inside story of the Alice Cooper group, 1996), "Glen never wrote a song, he wrote ond album, went nowhere and great guitar parts. He played Warner Bros took Zappa's la- real good slide guitar and, ironically, he got in Guitar Player magazine's best riffs of all time for for 'Eighteen'."

In 1972, the glam, gory. macabre and glittery Alice Cooper show triumphed at Wembley Arena (with Roxy Music as support) and the band topped it all with Elected, another nightmarish vision for America to contend with at the time of Watergate. They then recorded part of the following album, Billion Dollar Babies, in the UK with hangers-on like Marc Bolan, Donovan and Harry Nilsson contributing. It entered the British charts at No

guillotine execution. "Helio Hurray" and "No

were credited for the song (a on stage, Buxton had become



1. The group had their own plane and were making millions of dollars, playing a live set which now climaxed with a

More Mr Nice Guy" were hit singles in 1973, but by now all five members were drinking heavily, especially Buxton. This became a major problem and, little by little, he was edged out of the recordings for the Muscle of Love album. The producer Bob Ezrin brought in session heavyweights such as Mick Mashbur to replace Buxton while he was in a rehab clinic. On the next tour, Mashbur was actually hiding in the wings, filling out the sound while,



Best riffs: Buxton (far left) with, from left, Dunaway, Bruce, Smith and (at front) Furnier - the Alice Cooper group

a shadow of his former self. By 1974, the Alice Cooper identity had become to all intents and purposes the band's singer. He was now holding court with Salvador Dali, Liaza Minelli and Groucho Marx. There was talk of a movie, of solo albums by various members and law suits were festering between Shep Gordon, Alice Cooper's manager and Herb Cohen, Frank Zappa's manager who had sold the group on to Warner Bros.

Cohen won the publishing rights on all recordings up to Billion Dollar Babies and, in a

desperate move, Gordon convinced Alice to ditch his colleagues and go solo. "Welcome to my Nightmare" (which used Vincent Price's portentous vocal tones a good nine years before Michael Jackson's Thriller) was a great success for the singer, while Bruce, Smith and Dunaway floundered with their own Billion Dollar Babies offshoot band.

Later, Buxton drifted back to Arizona, tried to commit suicide and lost his house to the Internal Revenue Service, He eventually moved to lowa, got married, and worked on his farm while still jamming with lo-

The original Alice Cooper act strongly influenced Kiss's use of make-up and pyrotechnics and the New York Dolls' louche debauchery. Along with MC5, the Stooges and the Velvet Underground, Alice Cooper lit the fuse for punk via the Ramones and the Sex Pistols. In 1976, Johnny Rotten actually sung along to "Eighteen" on the juke-box when auditioning to join the Pistols. More recently, shock rockers like Marilyn Manson have taken on Alice Cooper's theatrical mantle and

reintroduced horror spectacle to the grunge generation.

Glen Buxton's original guitar riffs remain at the core of Alice Cooper's solo concerts to this day. On hearing of Buxton's demise, the singer paid him a fond tribute: "I grew up with Glen, started the band with him, and he was one of my best friends. I think I laughed more with him than anyone else. He was an underrated and influential guitarist, a genuine rock'n'roll rebel. Wherever he is now, I'm sure that there's a cigarette and a guitar nearby." - Pierre Perron

For Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS, please telephone 0171-293 201 or fax to 0171-293 2010. Charges are

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

principing at Mannau
Changing of the Guard
The Household Covalry Mounted Regiment
mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse
Geards, Hang ist Bahalian The Royal Regiment
formed, Hang ist Bahalian The Royal Regiment
of Wakes mounts the Queen's Guard, at Buch
and provided by the

#### **Birthdays**

Mr Adam Ant, rock singer, 43; Lord Baker of Dorking CH, former gov-erument minister, 63; Mr John Bar-ry, popular musician and composer. 64; Lord Biffen, former government minister, 67; Mr Charles Bronson, actor, 75; The Earl of Caithness, former government minister, 49; Mr Frank Cook MP, 62; Sir Kenneth Corley, former chief executive, Joseph Lucas, 89; Miss Violetta Elvin, former prima ballerina, 72; Mr Roy Emerson, tennis player, 61; Mrs Jean Floud, former principal of Newnham College, Cambridge, 82; Mr Michael Gallemore, former editor, Sporting Life, 53; Sir Philip Goodhart, former MP, 72; Mr John Heppell MP, 49; Mr Larry Holmes, heavyweight boxing champion, 48; Sir Ludovic Kennedy, writer and broad-caster, 78; Sir Christopher Leaver, wine merchant, and former Lord Mayor of London, 60; Viscount Linley, furniture designer, 36; Lulu (Maric Lawrie), singer, 49; Mr Tony McNulty MP, 39; Maj-Gen Viscount Monckton of Brenchley, banker, 82;

Mr Kenneth Morgan, former trade

union leader, 69; Mr Conor Cruise O'Brien, editor, author and politician, 80: The Hon Michael Pakenham, diplomat, 54; Sir Timothy Raison, former MP and government minis-ter, 68; Mr Albert Reynolds, former Irish prime minister (Taoiseach), 64; Mr Nick Simper, rock musician, 51;Ms Jacqui Smith MP, 35; Mr Vanni Treves, senior partner, Mac-farlanes, and chairman BBA Group, 57: Vice-Admiral Sir John Webster, former Flag Officer, Phymouth, 65; Mr Martin Williams, High Com-missioner to Zimbabwe, 56; Mr Ian

#### Anniversaries

Births: Lucan, Roman poet, 39; Annibale Carracci, painter, 1560; Karl Baedeker, guide-book publish-er, 1801; Vincenzo Bellini, operatic composer, 1801; André-Georges Malraux, writer and politician, 1901. Deaths: Robert Lowth, Bishop of n, writer and poet, 1787; Annie Oakley (Phoebe Anne Oakley Mozee (Moses)), entertainer and roman, 1926; Henri-Emile

Benoît Matisse, painter, 1954. On this day: the Act of Supremacy was passed, making the king head of the English Church, 1534; the German fleet mutinied at Kiel, 1918; Turkey abolished the use of the Arabic alphabet and adopted the Roman, 1928; George II returned to Greece, and the country once more became a monarchy, 1935: Laika, the Russian space dog, was sent into space in Sputnik II, 1957. Today is the Feast Sputnik II, 1957. Today is the Feast Day of St Amicus, St Hubert, St Malachy of Armagh, St Martin de Porres, St Pirminus, St Rumwald and St Winifred or Gwenfrewi.

#### Lectures

Victoria and Albert Museum: Gareth Williams, The Donaldson Collection of Art Nouveau Furniture", 2.30pm. Gresham College, Barnard's Inn Hall, London EC1: Clare Willsdon, "Picturing London: the murals at the Royal Exchange", 1pm. Exeter University: Jack Priestley. "Spiritual Development: where

#### CASE SUMMARIES: 3 NOVEMBER 1997

porters of the All England Law Renorts.

#### Mental health R v Bournewood Community & Men-

tal Health NHS Trust, ex p L: QBD (Crown Office List) (Owen I) 9 Oct

Where a patient was informally admitted into hospital he was, at all times, free to leave. Accordingly the applicant, who suffered from autism and was unable to speak, had not been unlawfully detained when he was admitted and retained in

The following notes of judg- Paul Bowen (Scott-Mancrieff Harbour ments were prepared by the re- & Sinclair) for the applicant: John Grace QC (Beachcroft Stanleys) for the

#### lllegal importation Hashwani v Commissioners of Customs

and Excise: OBD (Div Ct) (Kennedy LJ. Smith J) 21 Oct 1997. Artefacts seized by the Com-

missioners as having been imported without licence or other authority, but subsequently released when a magistrates' court refused to make an order for condemnation, might still be ordered to be condemned on appeal despite their being outside the juris-

diction by the date of the appeal, provided that at the date of the forfeiture proceedings before the magistrates' court the artefacts had been properly seized.

Cherie Booth QC, Rabinder Singh (Zaiwalla & Co) for the appellant; Andrew Bird, Nicki McLaren (C&E Solicitor) for the Commis Customs & Excise.

R v Chester and North Wales Legal Aid Area Office (No I2), ex p Floods of Queensbury Ltd: QBD Crown Office List (Popplewell |) 16 Oct 1997. The applicant, a limited company, had assigned to a director and shareholder the benefit of a claim which it had commenced in an action before the Official Referee and was accordingly not entitled to legal aid. There was no obligation outside the express contractual terms which imposed an "fiduciary" obligation upon the applicant, and it did not therefore come within s 2(10) of the Legal Aid Act 1988.

David Pannick QC, Michael Fordhar (Legal Aid Board) for the respondent; Colin Reese QC (Morrison Skirrow) for the companies: Philip Havers QC, Robert Jay (Winward Fearon) for the

## 17/SHARES

## Blue chips' results set to provide a distraction from world market thrills

WEEK AHEAD



Spring to the second

when Karoff and

Electrical States

Design Seal

Am: Date of

Mary Control of the C

DEREK PAIN STOCK MARKET REPORTER OF THE YEAR

as debate still rages whether it 6,000. was merely a correction or the start of a bear run, the stock centrate on a string of company results this week.

provided few profit figures. So the market has had little to distract it from the gyrations around the world. A heavy reporting schedule would, of course, not have reduced last week's succession of thrills and spills but at least it would cise to think about and, just perhaps, stopped some absorbing the wilder rumours which swept the market and

that Footsie will experience an any portfolio. indecisive time until the year and then the scenario is strong stituents have, so far, indicated compared with £740m in the

Footsie, driven largely by financials, has, despite its recent market can, if it wishes, con- fall from grace, enjoyed a Garfield Weston's cash rich and per cent at £465m with curmost have made headway.

This week's crop of figures have given dealers something chips which would inevitably feature in any quality list for times of stress and strain.

They may on occasions look exceedingly dull against BP offers third-quarter figcreated such pandemonium. the (often short-lived) high fly-The most popular guess is ers but they deserve a place in Générale Strauss Turnbull

progress with the index ending their intention of producing second quarter. In the third

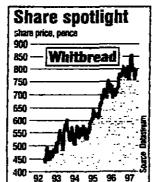
British Petroleum to Marks & £650m.

spectacular year. It started at sprawling food empire is rency movements retarding. Interim profits should not be 4.118.5 with estimates it would expected to get the week off to overseas earnings. Full-year's far short of £200m against The past few weeks have reach 4,600 regarded as highly a low-key start today with profits may nudge £1.2bn. optimistic. So last week's close, year's profits off £9m to £420m; 4,842.3, should brighten the sterling's strength and the BSE lives of many investors. It is crisis have taken their toll. true supporting shares have not Still, after selling its Irish superfared nearly as well. Even so, markets, ABF is sitting on more than £1.5bn and it is Mr Weston's spending plans which, includes some of the blue says Alan Erksine at NatWest Securities, is the "biggest single issue for the stock".

> Tomorrow its the turn of BP, M&S and Thames Water. ures, John Toalster at Société looks for net income, on a re-A dozen Footsie con-placement-cost basis, of £674m

Interim figures from M&S Associated British Foods, are expected to be up some 8

Thames Water keeps the water profits season flowing and should manage an interim increase of 19 per cent to



scars of the windfall tax.

has the distinction of kicking off the brewery results season. £178m.

Whitbread has invested urgency. Although it ranks as around £255m against reward shareholders at the the nation's fourth-largest £239.1m are likely. brewer, beer represents a rel-

its, around 13 per cent. will be distorted by industrial ures since the Royal/Sun lift to 2.1p.

On Wednesday Whithread strike cost £125m. A 40 per cent dive to £270m is a possibie result

ScottishPower, taking in Southern Water, also reports on Wednesday and should manage interim profits of more heavily in restaurants around £250m compared with than its rivals which, in the £188.3m Another giant of the main, seem more keen on high street, Boots, checks in on trendy theme bars. But there Thursday. It should have enis a feeling it will have to injoyed another good run but the crease its retail estate beyond group is still finding do-it-Café Rouge, Pizzaland and yourself a struggle. Its Do-it-Beefeater to keep up its mo- All chain probably lost money, mentum. Another retail con- say £1.5m, in the six months to

Royal & Sun Alliance and arively minor part of its prof- Mercury Asset Management this week's spotlight are unare others with a reporting task likely to lift dividends. But British Airways slies in on on Thursday. The insurance Wyndeham Press, on Friday, Wednesday. Its interim results group's first nine-month fig- should manage an 11 per cent

After last week's roller-coaster, 1998 at 5,800 points or even profits; they runge from quarter last year BP produced £210m. It should also show the unrest and sterling. BA has in-merger could be around also show the unrest and sterling. BA has in-merger could be around the first line's cabin crew £730m with a share buy-back dicated that July's cabin crew £730m with a share buy-back possibly on the agenda. MAMs interim is seen as emerging at £88m against £81.8m.

Shell is due to report on Thursday. Third-quarter net income should roll out £1.17bn against £1.11bn. And on Friday it is the turn of another Anglo-Dutch giant, Unilever. It, too, has third-quarter results to announce; around £825m,

a modest advance, is expected. Most of the blue-chip groups should underline their safe-haven appeal by increasing their dividends. BP could cept could be a matter of end September. Profits of be an exception; Shell does not third-quarter stage.

Some of the smaller fry in

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BUSINESS & CITY EDITOR, JEREMY WARNER NEWS DESK: 0171-293 2636 FAX: 0171-293 2098 E-MAIL: INDYBUSINESS@INDEPENDENT.CO.UK FINANCIAL JOURNAL OF THE YEAR

## Vickers on track to buy GKN Defence

Vickers, the defence and engineering group, looks set to buy GKN's armoured vehicle business within weeks, raising the prospect of further job cuts in both companies. As Chris Godsmark. Business Correspondent, reports, Vickers is also to embark on a £100m expansion of its marine engines business.

Fresh from its decision to hoist a for-sale sign over Rolls-Royce Motors, the luxury car maker. Vickers is expected to conclude discussions by the end of the year to buy GKN Defence, the armoured vehicle arm of the automotive components to Westland helicopters group. Sir Colin Chandler, Vickers' chairman, and CK Chow, chief executive of GKN, are said to have held talks about a sale some time ago and the two companies are now at an advanced stage in the negotiations.

The deal would bring almost certain victory for Vickers in the race to win two lucrative government contracts, for the so-called battlefield taxi, the multi-role armoured vehicle (MRAV), and Tracer, a hitech armoured vehicle with sensor equipment. The two companies are members of rival consortia bidding for both contracts, though Vickers' chances of success were already stronger than GKN's.

Vickers also believes it has secured back-

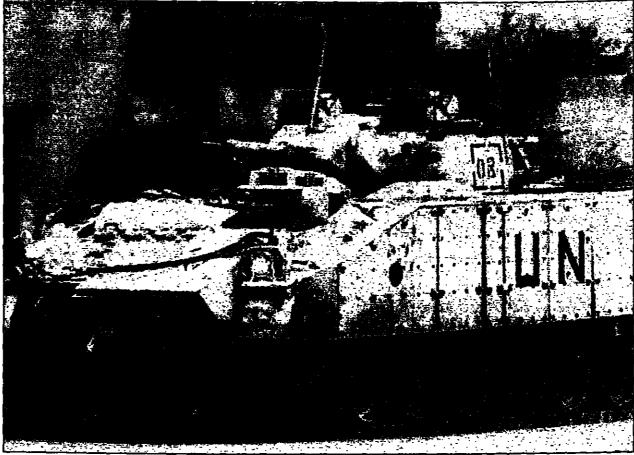
ing from the Ministry of Defence for an acquisition, with ministers already pledged to spur the rationalisation of the European defence sector. A deal would benefit both businesses as their order books decline and the new contracts take time to materialise.

Both companies declined to comment about the discussions last night. A GKN spokesman said talk of a deal was "purely speculative". However, the sale could raise up to £100m for GKN, although some analysts have suggested a much lower figure given the division's declining order book.

The consolidation would mean more job losses, with the cuts likely to concentrate on GKN's remaining armoured vehicle factory at Telford in Shropshire. The group's armoured vehicle operations have contracted as big overseas contracts come to an end with no further UK orders in sight. In January the company axed 270 jobs at the Telford plant, more than a third of the

A large Kuwaiti contract for the Warrior tracked combat vehicle is almost finished while the British army's order for Piranha. an eight-wheeled armoured car built under licence from Mowag of Switzerland, was also recently completed. The group has also closed its smaller Glover Webb site near Southampton, rationalising all its armoured vehicle operations in Telford. Meanwhile Vickers, now the largest UK maker of armoured vehicles, is close to completing the £2ba order for 400 Challenger tanks for the British army at its Newcastle factory.

Meanwhile, Vickers is expected to in-



A GKN Warrior combat vehicle on UN service in Bosnia, but at home the order book is shrinking

iect a further £100m of investment next year into its its propulsion technology business, which makes water-jet engines to power the new generation of advanced ferries. Based in Sweden, the company is eyeing a series of prospective contracts as ferry companies replace their fleets of older ships on short crossings with catamaran-style vessels.

The cash for the GKN acquisition and new investment would come from the sale of Rolls-Royce, which Vickers hopes could net £400m to £500m, and the sell-off of its troubled medical operations. The medical businesses, which make a variety of hospital monitoring equipment, are expected to raise about £80m.

The Rolls-Royce sale, which was confirmed last week, has become increasingly clouded. Though Vickers is keen to emphasise the wide range of possible bidders, Daimler-Benz has publicly appeared to rule out a deal, though executives are understood to have spoken several times to Sir Colin over the past week.

warned that share and property prices were

rising to unsustainable levels, as they did

at the peak of the booms in the early 1970s

Meanwhile, Gordon Brown, the Chan-

cellor of the Exchequer, yesterday reaf-

firmed his commitment to keep the pound

out of the exchange rate mechanism

(ERM) before the UK joins European

and later 1980s.

## Shake-up at C&W hits executives

Dick Brown, the energetic chief executive of Cable & Wireless, has parted company with at least a quarter of the group's most senior executives this year, it has emerged. Chris Godsmork reports on the drive to shake up C&W's management culture.

Since the beginning of the year Mr Brown. has embarked on a radical strategy to inject new blood into Cable & Wireless's worldwide operations, which stretch from the Caribbean to Hong Kong and Japan.
At a briefing to around 100 executives.

held in Cable & Wireless's training college in Coventry recently, Mr Brown said only half of those who had attended the previous gathering six months before were still in the same jobs. A Cable &Wireless spokesman said about a quarter of the executives had left the company altogether while the remainder had been moved to new responsibilities.

The managers affected were in some of the most senior jobs in Cable & Wireless, many with the title of "director" and earning salaries of around £100,000.

Several were responsible for Cable & Wireless's overseas operations, including include Richard Wainright-Lee, who was head of regional operations and deputy finance director: Geoff Wiggan, another director for regional businesses and Richard Goswell, who dealt with the group's Asian activities.

The unprecedented restructuring has been seen internally as an attempt by Mr Brown, an American who joined Cable &Wireless 15 months ago, to inject a. more US-orientated corporate culture into the formerly state-owned telephones

However, the changes have met opposition from within Cable & Wireless's ranks, with the old guard arguing that Mr Brown has diluted much of the international knowledge, built up over decades, which helped the group win overseas operating licences. One former senior director warned that the company no longer had enough senior managers. "Some of the best people have left, which seems a great shame to me," he said.

## Economists warn of further market chaos if base rates rise

The Bank of England could trigger another bout of turmoil in the London stock market if it raises interest rates this week, leading monetarist economists have warned.

The shadow monetary policy committee, which includes Sir Alan Walters, Lady Thatcher's former economic adviser, and Professor Patrick Minford from Cardiff Business School, urged the Bank's Monetary Policy Committee to keep base rates unchanged at 7 per cent when it meets on Thursday,

Many City economists expect the Bank to raise rates by 0.25 per cent, in order to avoid breaching the upper limit of 3.5 per cent in the Government's inflation target in the future.

If inflation rises by more than 1 per cent above the central target rate of 25 per cent, the Governor of the Bank has to write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer giving an explanation.

But Professor Minford said he did not believe the Bank would risk further market turbulence by raising rates. "After the + 1987:

stock market drop you've got the risk of overkill. Exchange rates are also high that a rise in interest rates could trigger further falls in share prices."

The FTSE 100 index ended last week 127.9 points lower at 5330.8, having recovered some of its lost ground after a 458 point plunge at one stage on Tuesday. Despite the turnoil, some City economists have urged against loosening monetary policy to settle the markets, a mistake made by policymakers after the crash of

The group of monetarists, which met before the crash, said rates would have to rise in the future to meet the inflation target, though in the short term the strength of the pound would have a dampening effect on economic activity.

Professor Minford said be believed the UK economy had "peaked", with consumer spending growth slowing as the impact of building society windfall bonuses ebbed, despite continuing strong growth in the money supply.

Brown said on BBC television. However, others on the committee

economic and monetary union. "We have no intention of entering the ERM," Mr

Chris Godsmark

IN BRIEF

#### Rate of company failures drops sharply

The number of companies going bust fell sharply again in the third quarter of the year, according to accountants KPMG. as the feel-good factor which came too late to benefit the last government continues to make itself felt. Only 260 companies went into receivership between July and September, compared with 320 in the previous quarter and 347 in the third quarter a year ago. South-east England again saw the most receiverships with 113, but this was well down on 135 the previous quarter and 165 at the same time last year. The Midlands and Northwest also saw sharp falls, but the Southwest and Wales saw no reductions.

### M&S profits set to rise 7%

Sir Richard Greenbury, chairman of retailers Marks & Spencer, is expected to announce tomorrow an increase in profits of between 7 and 10 per cent for the six months to the end of September, in spite of the strong pound and a substantial expansion plans. M&S has already announced plans to spend in excess of £1.5hn and increase retail space by up to 20 per cent, including the refurbishment of 19 stores bought from Littlewoods in July.

#### WH Smith sells US chain

WH Smith has sold The Wall, its US music retailing chain, for \$47m (£28m) to Camelot Music, whose stores are about to emerge from Chapter 11 bankruptcy arrangements. The move is the first disposal since Richard Handover took over as chief executive and fought off a hostile approach from Tim Waterstone, creator of Smith's bookshop business, Waterstones. The Wall has 153 stores in the north-east of the US. It had sales last year of £105m and broke even despite difficult trading. Smith's said it had previously written off £37m of goodwill from the business.

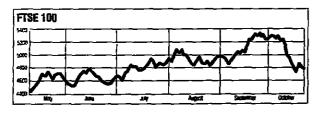
#### UK firm to list on Nasdaq

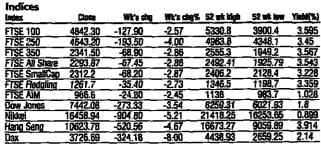
A young British company based in Cambridge, which claims to have world-beating Internet search technology, is set to become the first of its kind to list on Nasdaq after more than quadrupling its value since it began trading. AutoNomy Systems, which has developed a system to sift information by concept rather than keyword, will become the first British Internet software developer to launch in the US. It will aim for a listing in the first quarter of 1998 after doubling sales in every quarter since it began in June 1996. The company was set up by two Cambridge entrepreneurs in their early 30s, Dr Mike Lynch and Richard Gaunt, with £10m of capital from English National Investment Company, the vehicle owned by Joe Lewis, claimed to be Britain's richest man.

#### London tops Euro-poil

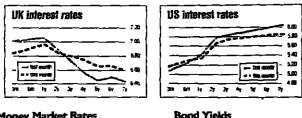
London has retained its position as Europe's favourite city for business ahead of Paris, Frankfurt, Brussels and Amsterdam in an annual poll of more than 500 European companies conducted by property consultants Healey & Baker. London also remains the first choice for the title of future financial capital of Europe in spite of the challenge from Frankfurt and the virtual certainty the UK will not join the single currency in the first wave.

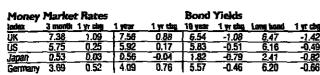
### STOCK MARKETS



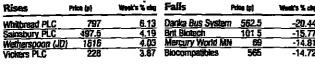


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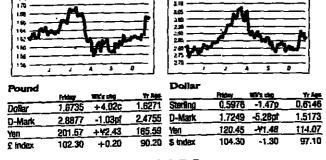




#### MAIN PRICE CHANGES



#### CURRENCIES



#### OTHER INDICATORS

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## MEPC strikes £300m deal with GE

MEPC, the UK's thirdlargest property group is realising £300m in cash by selling 191 properties, mainly shops and offices, to the property arm of GE Capital investment Services, the investment subsidiary of General Electric. As Clifford German reports, confirmation could come as early as this morning.

MEPC, the under-performing property giant which has been under constant pressure from shareholders dissatisfied with the lack of value in the company, has found a buyer for a portfolio of smaller properties. mainly shops and offices in the London and Manchester.

James Tuckey, chief executive of MEPC, promised six weeks ago to return £300m to shareholders, roughly the same sum as will be realised by the deal with GE.

At the same time the group's American and Australian businesses were put up for sale with an estimated price tag of around £580m. But these assets accounted for less than a third of MEPC's net assets of around £1.9bn, yet they contributed 48 per cent of underlying profits in 1996. Selling them was expected to force MEPC to cut its dividend for 1997/98 from 20p to 12p. This

may not now be necessary. The smaller properties which make up the bulk of the new deal with GE were also surplus to requirements as MEPC increasingly focused on bigger property units, but were conof. Selling them will allow MEPC to take advantage of the marked recovery in commercial property values in the UK and will remove some of the pressure to sell the American and Australian assets quickly.

GE has been active in the UK property scene since 1986 as a lender, investor and backer of joint ventures. Its current UK asset value is around £700m and consists of a mix of properties, typically 35 per cent offices, 45 per cent in shops, shopping centres and retail parks and 20 per cent industrial. Since March 1994 it has completed 13 big deals including four this year but the MEPC deal will be the largest yet.

World-wide, GE Capital Services has a property portfolio of around \$16bn, and GE Capital Services itself has assets

of \$227bn with 27 specialised sidered more difficult to dispose MEPC earlier this year rejected merger offers from Hammerson. In the summer it

held talks with Burford, another underperforming property group with assets of around £500m but they were quickly discontinued. Meanwhile, MEPC bought PSIT, a property investment trust, during the summer for £247m. Some of PSIT's properties are expected to feature in the sale to GE.

MEPC last week announced it is to move from its prestige office in St James's Square in London, where rents are commonly £50 a square foot to offices in Wigmore Street, where rents are around £35 a square foot.

MEPC shares rose 3.5p on Friday to 519.5p. up 7p. It values the company at £2.18bn.

## Gold-mining giants face challenge from low-cost producers as price plunges

The continuing slump in world gold prices - which last week fell to a 12-year low - could put many established deep mines out of business, according to rival lowcost producers. Clifford German reports.

The warning of a global shakeout came with growing indications that Italy could become a leading gold-producing province by the new millennium if one new entrant fulfils its early promise. It is Gold Mines of Sardinia (GMS), listed on the Alternative Investment Market in London, which opened a new mine on the Mediterranean island this summer.

Its first quarterly report on Friday showed it produced 1,893 ounces of gold in its first six weeks, including 670 ounces in the final week when the mine was operating at planned capacity. The mine's average cost of production is \$222 an ounce, ceeds the supply of newly mined

gold, which closed at \$313.25 an ounce in London on Friday. As John Morris, the chief ex-

ecutive of GMS, points out, at least 30 per cent of the world output is uneconomic at present prices and further falls in the price would lead to a marked reduction in the supply of newmined gold. Some deep South African mines have production costs of up to \$350 an ounce.

The price of gold fell again last week to its lowest level since July 1985, after a study by Swiss officials claimed the central bank of Switzerland could sell 1,400 tonnes of gold, more than half its reserves. Sales could not begin unless they are approved by a national referendum, which cannot be held before 1999, but the sale would be the equivalent of six months' world-wide production. Analysis predict that the gold price could fall below \$300 in the near future.

Commercial demand for

gold, mainly for jewellery and

industrial uses, consistently ex-

well below the current price of gold each year by around 50 per cent. But speculative demand for bullion is now insignificant, and the market is overhung by the combined gold reserves of the International Monetary Fund and dozens of central banks, which between them hold enough gold to meet world-wide demand for 10 years.

The market has been further depressed by excessive forward sales of gold, which has not yet been mined, by mining companies anxious to speed up their The discovery of gold on Sar-

dinia is a recent event. The metal is not visible to the naked eye, and it took a group of incredulous geology students to detect it and a team of Australian mining entrepreneurs to extract it. But the island has large areas of low-grade gold ore both at depth and close to the surface, where it is relatively easy to mine and refine.

The whole island is rich in minerals but few ventures have been commercially successful and the last lead-zinc mine closed at 24.25p.

closed down just this summer. The island is also awash with earth-moving machinery and crushing mills left over from lead, zinc and copper mines.

GMS was listed on AJM last year and has the backing of Rothschilds, Fidelity and Henderson, while brokers Williams de Broe have put UK private clients into the stock. The regional government authority, EMSA, also took a 30 per cent stake.

Output is expected to reach 40,000 ounces a year shortly, rising to 70,000 ounces a year by the end of 1998 if additional capacity is brought on stream. As output rises there will be probiems separating gold from the copper content of the ore, which increases as the mine goes deeper, but these are two or three years away.

If all goes well, future development could be farmed out to joint ventures with established giants like BHP and Minorco. The shares have ranged from 12p to 33.5p since they

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DAVIES ON THE COLLAPSE IN THE FAR EAST

## Why the world is not threatened by deflation

markets around the world has raised the spectre of global deflation in the minds of many investors. The decline of about 10 per cent in world stock prices which was seen before the rebound last Tuesday was the first such setback in equities in the past 25 years which had not been preceded by a rise of at least 50 basis points in global bond yields.

In other words, market paranoia on this occasion was not triggered by the usual concerns that inflation would rise and that this would be followed by higher nominal interest rates, leading to a decline in both bond and equity prices. Instead, the panic in the past few weeks has been triggered by precisely the opposite factors - downward pressure on goods prices, leading to declines in profit margins, and potentially then to global deflation.

As deflation sets in, real interest rates may rise, because central banks are unable to reduce nominal interest rates in line with price declines, so monetary conditions are unintentionally tightened. This tightening then leads to further declines in demand - ie to a self-reinforcing slump. Bond prices rise sharply as equity prices collapse. To those investors who were raised in the inflationary 1970s and 1980s, and who may therefore think that this story sounds inherently implausible, there is no need to look back to the 1930s to find a real-life example of the havoc that deflationary forces can wreak - just look at Japan today. Last week, it was possible to find plenty of investors who believed that the chilling Japanese example was likely to spread to the rest of the world.

Support for this view is evident in the recent behaviour of world producer prices. which measure the prices of manufactured

The phenomenal recent volatility in stock goods as they leave the factory gates. At the start of 1997, the six-month annualised inflation rate for producer prices in the major economies was around 2 per cent. Now, following the collapse in Asian activity, this inflation rate has declined to -1 per cent. In other words, deflation is already visible in the goods sectors of the OECD economies.

However, much of this reflects earlier developments in commodity prices, which fell sharply in the first half of this year, primarily triggered by a major weakening in energy prices. Commodity prices have rebounded strongly in the past three months, and importantly there are no signs of a significant fall in overall commodity demand at present, particularly for energy

Admittedly, the Asian meltdown shows every sign of getting much worse before it starts to improve, and this will sharply curtail global aggregate demand. There are also some fears that a decline in global equity prices could damage confidence and thus depress consumer spending in the US and elsewhere. Taken together, these factors could certainly depress global inflation, and if they prove large enough they could even lead to outright deflation.

However, it is more likely that the impact of these negative shocks will be more than offset by the positive impact of other shocks - for example, rising confidence and domestic demand in Latin America, Eastern Europe and the United States; a gradual recovery in confidence in continental Europe; and the general impact of very expansionary monetary conditions in most corners of the globe. In other words, no systemic fall is likely in aggregate consumer prices.

In judging the relative strength of

present, four key points should be made. First, the monetary policy environment is scurcely conducive to global deflation. Growth in nominal GDP in the OECD area is running at around 4 to 4.5 per cent. which is at least 2 per cent higher than would be consistent with global deflation. On Goldman Sachs' indices of global monetary conditions, the major central banks are delivering exceptionally easy conditions at present; the easiest they have been for at least 20 years, Broad money growth is much stronger that the growth in real GDP, suggesting that liquidity is ample. Furthermore, should the growth in nominal GDP falter, there is scope, if necessary, for monetary policy to be

Second, the wealth effects from any likely stock market "crash" from current levels should not prove very significant. At the low point last week, world share prices were still up by about 9 per cent this calendar year, after a 14 per cent rise in 1996. The positive wealth effects from these increases in equity prices have not

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Inflation in main industrial economies

eased further in all countries except

expansionary and contractionary forces at yet been fully reflected in consumer spending around the world. By the same token, any decline in equity prices from current levels would not depress spending immediately. In fact, after the inevitable near-term confidence effects had been absorbed, consumer spending might continue to rise as a lagged response to earlier increases in equity prices. This, indeed, was one of the lessons of the 1987 crash.

Third, Goldman Sachs has recently carried out some simulations to estimate the impact on the world economy of a much bigger economic shock from Asia than is currently forecast. Specifically, Goldman assumed a slump big enough to trigger an improvement in the current account of 4 per cent of GDP in the Asean countries, 2 per cent of GDP in the rest of Asia and I per cent of GDP in Japan. An adjustment of this size would cut 0.4 per cent off the level of US GDP, 0.3 per cent off European GDP and 1.6 per cent off Japanese GDP next year. The overall impact on OECD GDP is about 0.5 per cent - significant but not yet catastrophic. The impact on inflation is also important, but not path-breaking. Assuming a shock of the

above magnitude, the world output gap would widen by 1 per cent, curbing world inflation next year by about 0.4 to 0.5 per cent. Nasty for some manufacturing companies, but not the end of the world.

Fourth, this shock occurs at a time when upward revisions to world economic activity in other geographical areas are taking place. The US is now expected to grow by 4 per cent this year, compared with an expectation of 3 per cent a few months ago. There have been modest upward revisions to European growth forecasts. Latin America is expected to grow by 5 per cent this year and next, Eastern Europe by 4 per cent in both years. Even if OECD growth were curbed by 1 per cent next year - an extreme assumption - the world conomy would still be a long way from recession.

Importantly, this also seems to be the belief that the global central banks are operating on. While they would certainly be prepared to provide additional liquidity in the near-term in the event of a market meltdown, any easing will prove temporary. On occasions last week, bond markets have flirted with the view that the Fed might shortly be willing to ease policy, and keep rates lower, for several quarters. This is not at all likely.

In summary, Asia is a big place, accounting for about a third of world GDP. and it is suffering a foreign exchange and equity collapse similar to that in Europe in 1992/93. Anyone who thinks that these market shocks will not have severe continent-wide economic effects is clearly out to dinner, as well as to lunch.

But while Asia might be big, the world is a lot bigger - and it is important to remember that the rest of it is doing rather

## How the financial crisis could strengthen the Asian economies

BY STEPHEN

VINES IN

It might be imagined that only would see a silver lining in the financial crisis which is overwhelming the countries of East Asia.

As markets in the Far East begin another week of uncertainty, some economists in the region argue that the negative sentiment has been overdone and that the turmoil may even make these countries stronger.

Any nation with the combination of an export-driven economy and a currency whose convertible value has plunged almost in half can hardly fail to become supercompetitive. As this applies to Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand, the four countries hit hardest by the financial

turmoil, it must be good news. They are part of an export boom which outstripped the rest of the world some three it is forcing on these countries are precisely

times or more and led to the kind of double economic digit growth not seen elsewhere in the first half of the decade nor, for that matter, at any other time in history.

HONG KONG According to World Bank figures, between 1990and

by Chris Pries

1995 Indonesia's export volume grew on average by over 21 per cent per year, while the value of those exports grew by just 11.5

In Malaysia, the volume growth was 17.8 per cent and the value growth just 8.6 per cent. The Philippines did less well, expanding export volumes by an average 10.2 per cent, which in value terms amounted to almost 4 per cent. Thailand's exports rose 21.6 per cent in volume and 18.6 per cent in value, a far better performance than any of its neighbours.

One reason for Thailand's better-thanaverage record was that its currency maintained a consistently modest exchange rate with major customer nations.

The other countries saw their currencies rise and exports fall after 1995. Now all four countries share the same advantage, only more so. They can even afford price rises in their own currencies which will still translate into price falls for over-

ane negative side of the picture is that falling currencies produce high interest rates and raise. The negative side of the picture is that rates and raise the cost of imports, both of which pressures lead to higher inflation. Inflationary fears are behind the scramble by economists to produce downward revisions of GDP growth estimates. The Bank of America, for example, is marking down its 1998 collective growth estimate for the Asean nations of south-east Asia from 7.5 per cent to 5.9 per cent.

However, this may prove to be a shortteam phenomenon while in the medium to

longer term these economies are going to henefit greatly from an end to the grossly overblown asset values, mainly in the property market, which were the product of relatively cheap credit and cash searching for a home.

The distortion of asset values led to distortions in the economy, producing unnecessarily high costs and, as we have seen, rumous damage to finance houses who lent money recklessly.

The crash is shaking the dubious finance houses out of the system - just this weekend it was announced that the Indonesian government was closing down 16 insolvent banks.

A wave of bank closures has already swept through Thailand, while in the Philippines, which came under IMF strictures before these two countries, banks are in good shape, having the lowest ratio of liabilities relative to equity of any

country in the region. The IMF is now pouring money into both Thailand and Indonesia, and although it is far from a perfect arbiter of economic probity, many of the measures

> those which internal critics have been urging without response for some time.

In Malaysia, which is under no IMF strictures, the government itself has realised that many of its grandiose projects will have to go and that a bout of austerity may be no bad thing.

In other words, the financial crisis could bring these economies back down to earth. The fantastic valuations of Far East stock markets will fade, asset values will start resembling reality and, despite the setbacks, these economies, even in the short term, are likely to continue growing at a faster rate than economies elsewhere in the

Paul Schulte, the chief strategist at ING Barings Securities in Hong Kong believes that the markets are finally getting back to "decent valuations" and sees the share slump as a rational reaction to the exaggerated expectations which built up among investors.

"The herd is behaving rationally for a change," he said.

However, it may take a while to persuade the international fund managers that they should return to Far East markets, particularly as the near-term outlook is for more turbulence. "People just want to take their bat and ball and go home," Mr Schulte

They may be right to stay away. The shocks delivered to the financial system have been sudden and sharp but the policymakers in East Asia are still reluctant to take many of the hard decisions which are needed to reform their financial

The deflation of asset values will be hard to swallow and the dangers of inflation are ever present. However, to write off the world's fastest growing economies as a spent force seems a tad premature.

## Angels double their investments in start-ups

Business angels - individuals who help fund start-up and growing companies - commit nearly twice as much money to each investment as they did three years ago, according to research published today to mark Local Investment Networking Company (Linc).

The report, by Zsolt Lengyel of the London School of Economics and James Gulliford of Bristol Business School, finds the average transaction is worth £57,000, compared with £30,000 in 1994, while nearly a third of deals involve investments of more than £100,000.

The findings follow the pubgels registered with networks and seeking investment oppor-

tunities has doubled since December 1993 to more than in more than 700 registered 5,600. The number of investment opportunities has also risen substantially, by over 70 per cent to more than 2,200, while the number of networks seeking

BUSINESS TO BUSINESS

companies. In the past year, 373 angels have put more than £19m into 192 UK companies. Susan Krantz, general manager of Linc, said the research

the 10th anniversary of the lication of further research last to match would-be investors was "highly encouraging to those of us who believe that business angels offer a very Business Angel Capital" claims companies and start-ups seekthat in the past four years angels ing finance and other support".

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She added that the research demonstrated that the concept was gaining strength and meeting a real need for investors and investees. More than 70 per cent of those surveyed by Linc thought that the deals concluded were favourable to both sides. Nearly balf of the inments in the future.

#### week from the British Venture with opportunities has also more Capital Association suggesting than doubled, from 17 to 43. that the number of business an-The survey in "Sources of attractive option for growing make further informal invest-



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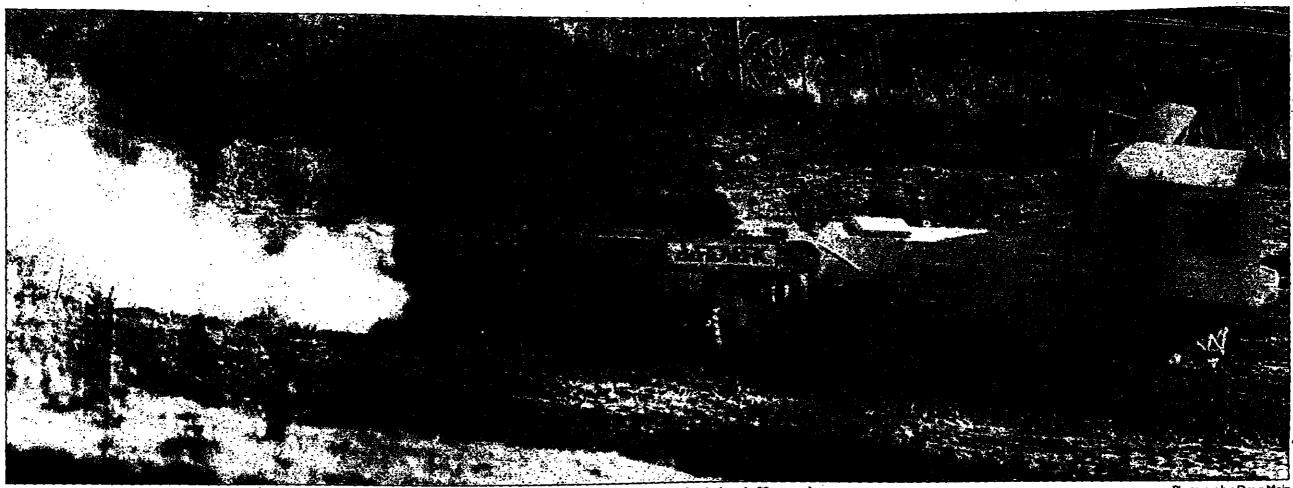
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## Aardvark digs in to rid the world of landmines



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Trucks outw

A British firm is at the forefront of clearing the estimated 119 million landmines still hidden underground. Steve Boggan rode in the 'Aardvark' -which works by simply driving over them.

blow up 10 cars or, as one of the you shouldn't feel a thing." munitions experts put it, to

"Five pounds will usually doing mental arithmetic in the

They were about 10ft away at the front of a machine that is destroy a car," said David Clark, making huge strides in the hazclaustrophobic armour-plated business of mine clearance.

low the rotating chains that The explosives weren't cut into the earth, churning it thing. throw a Mini Metro 30st into the directly underneath the cabin. up and detonating the hidden

> Suddenly, there was a huge blast that rocked the 13-ton veardous - indeed terrifying - hicle and plunged us into dark-

There were enough plastic cabin of the Aardvark. "There The charge was in front of the down on the cab. But Mr Clark, that has ever been invented. explosives underneath us to are five kilos underneath us. But Aardvark's blast shield and be 32, a former Royal Engineer, was right. We didn't feel a

> The Aardvark is the brainchild of David Sadler, a 58 year old accountant who used to make a living selling explosives to the oil industry. In 1984, however, he realised that there was a desperate need for new innovations to help deal with the 119 million landmines still concealed after conflicts dating back to the Second World War.

a vehicle that detonates mines "Diana's death certainly by thrashing them with its concentrated people's minds. chains. Many of its features date back to the last war, but its much better informed about armour plating and bullet-proof landmines and they want their windows make it the most governments to do something advanced mine-clearing vehicle about them."

Since its development, more

than 100 Aardvarks have been only £250,000 each, they have been bought by governments, armies and aid agencies, but since the death of Diana, the telephone in the company's remote office at Insch, 25 miles north of Aberdeen, hasn't stopped ringing. We have been inundated

with calls from people who want to begin clearing up the mess left behind after wars all The result was the Aardvark, over the world," said Mr Sadler. Now the public at large are

2,000 people are maimed or killed by landmines every sold in 32 countries. Costing month - or once every 20 minutes. More than 70 countries are now affected, the worst being Iran (16 million mines), Angola (15 million), Iraq (10 million), Afghanistan (10 million), Cambodia (10 million), Bosnia-Herzegovina (up to 6 million) and even Egypt, which is thought to have up to 23 million, many left over from the El Alamein campaign during the

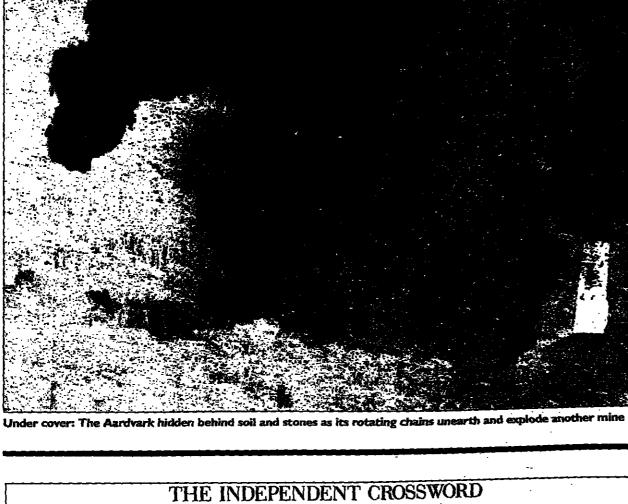
Second World War. Using traditional methods, it would be virtually impossible to clear the world's mines. Utilising either mine detectors which do not work with plastic mines - or simply prodding with knives, it can take a man a day to cover up to 36 square

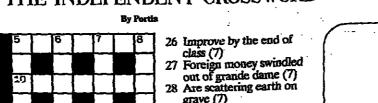
According to the Red Cross, yards. The Aardvark can clear a 10ft-wide path two-thirds of a mile long each hour. And, whereas the UN estimates that one person is killed for every 5,000 mines cleared, none of its operatives has ever been injured.

"It's wonderful to be able to make something like this that armies buy but which actually saves lives," said Mr Sadler. "In areas that have been mined, life grinds to a halt. No one will farm their fields, entire areas lie empty. But when we clear them. life gets back to normal. It's a

wonderful sight. In Afghanistan, the farmers who hadn't been on their land for years, followed behind the Aardvark where it had churned up the land, and they simply sowed seeds in our wake.







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13 Green measures (5)

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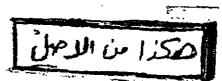
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